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VOLUME THE THIRD.

A DIALOGUE

OF

COMFORT AGAINST TRIBULATION:

BY

SIR THOMAS MORE, KNIGHT,

SOME TIME LORD CHANCELLOR OF ENGLAND.



SAINT GEORGE PRAY FOR ENGLAND.

LONDON:

CHARLES DOLMAN, 61, NEW BOND STREET.

MDCCCXLVII.

Integritas morum MORUM commendat, et ardor
Ingenii, et docto dulcis in ore decor.

Audoeni Epigr.

A

DIALOGUE

OF

COMFORT AGAINST TRIBULATION,

MADE BY THE RIGHT VIRTUOUS, WISE AND LEARNED MAN,

SIR THOMAS MORE,

SOMETIME LOED CHANCELLOR OF ENGLAND, WHICH HE WROTE IN THE
TOWER OF LONDON, A.D. 1534,

AND ENTITLED THUS:

A DIALOGUE OF COMFORT AGAINST TRIBULATION,

MADE BY AN HUNGARIAN IN LATIN, AND TRANSLATED OUT OF LATIN INTO
FRENCH, AND OUT OF FRENCH INTO ENGLISH.

NOW NEWLY SET FORTH,

WITH MANY PLACES RESTORED AND CORRECTED

BY CONFERENCE OF SUNDRY COPIES.

LONDON:

CHARLES DOLMAN, 61, NEW BOND STREET.

MDCCCXLVII.

Printed by J. & H. COX, BROTHERS (LATE COX & SONS),
74 & 75, Great Queen-street, Lincoln's-Inn Fields.



INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

THE present volume of the ENGLISH CATHOLIC LIBRARY introduces to modern readers a treatise by Sir Thomas More, "one of the ornaments of the English nation, one of the wisest, best, and most religious of mankind."* We say *introduce*, because, with the exception of his most notable UTOPIA, the works of that eminent martyr are known, save by name, to very few of his countrymen. Whether this has arisen from the cold and depressing influence of a system antagonistic to that faith of which he testified; or whether, from his name being so tragically incorporated with the great historical events of the sixteenth century, all attention to his writings has been absorbed in the contemplation of the man; is a question on which it is needless to speculate. Let us hope that the improving spirit of the present age will repair this disgraceful neglect; and that ere long a complete and satisfactory edition of the works of Sir Thomas More will be as rife and familiar on our shelves as those of Shakspeare and Bacon.

The biography of the virtuous Chancellor requires not to be penned by us anew. The Life by his great-grandson Cresacre, so ably edited by the learned and acute Mr. Hunter, is one of the most charming compositions in that department of literature; and in point of fidelity and interest is only equalled by that of Wolsey, which

* Rev. J. Hunter, *South Yorkshire*, i. 374.

the sagacity of the same editor has restored to the real author, George Cavendish. Those by Roper,* Cayley, and, more recently, by Mr. Walter,—apart from scarcer tractates within the cognizance of the erudite—comprise every particular of importance to their subject.

As the title-page bears, and as Cresacre More narrates, the *Dialogue of Comfort against Tribulation* was composed during its author's imprisonment in the Tower of London in 1534. "Which subject," this his descendant well observes, "he handleth so wittily as none hath come near him either in weight of grave sentences, devout considerations, or fit similitudes; seasoning always the troublesomeness of the matter with some merry jests or pleasant tales, as it were sugar, whereby we drink up the more willingly these wholesome drugs, of themselves unsavory to flesh and blood; which kind of writing he hath used in all his works, so that none can ever be weary to read them, though they be never so long."† And again, when speaking of his various works,—Surely of all the books that ever he made, I doubt whether I may prefer any of them before the said three Books of Comfort, yea or any other man's, either heathen or Christian, that have written (as many have), either in Greek or Latin of the said matter. And as for heathen, I do this worthy man plain injury, and do much abase him, in matching and comparing him with them, especially in this point: seeing that, were they otherwise never so incomparable, they lacked yet, and knew not the very especial and principal ground of comfort and consolation, that is, the true faith of Christ, in whom and for whom, and whose glory we must seek and fetch all our true comfort and consolation: well, let that pass; and let us further say, that as the said Sir Thomas More notably passeth many learned Christians, that have of the same matter written before, so let us add, that it may well be doubted, all matters considered and weighed, if any of the rest may seem much to pass him. There is

* The edition by Mr. Singer is a worthy companion to the labour of his friend, Mr. Hunter.

† P. 110.

in these books so witty, pithy, and substantial matter, for the easing, remedying, and patiently suffering of all manner of griefs and sorrows that may possibly encumber any man, by any manner or kind of tribulation, whether their tribulation proceed from any inward temptation or ghostly enemy, the devil, or any outward temptation of the world, threatening to bereave or spoil us of our goods, lands, honour, liberty, and freedom, by grievous and sharp punishment, and finally of our life withal, by any painful, exquisite, and cruel death; against all which he doth so wonderfully and effectually prepare, defend, and arm the reader, that a man cannot desire or wish any thing of any more efficacy or importance thereunto to be added. In the which book his principal drift and scope was to stir and prepare the minds of Englishmen manfully and courageously to withstand, and not to shrink at the imminent and open persecution which he foresaw, and immediately followed against the unity of the Church, and the Catholic faith of the same; albeit full wittily and warily, that the books might safer go abroad, he doth not expressly meddle with these matters, but covereth the matter under a name of an Hungarian, and of the persecution of the Turks in Hungary, and of the book translated out of the Hungarian tongue into Latin, and then into the English tongue.* And such golden consolations and encouragements, and genuine philosophy, were inscribed "with a coal;" his enemies having enhanced the pains of incarceration by depriving him of all ordinary writing materials!

The first edition of the *Dialogue of Comfort* was printed at London by Richard Tottel, 1553, in quarto. The next, from which our present reprint is obtained, at Antwerp, in 1573, in 16mo.: and again, at the same city, in 1574 and 1578. The portrait in this first Antwerp edition was unknown to Granger and Bromley.

The "Right Honourable and Excellent Ladie," to whom Fowler dedicated the work, was Jane, second daughter of Sir William Dormer (father of the first Lord Dormer of Wenge), by his first wife Mary, daughter to

* P. 340.

Sir William Sidney, ancestor to the Earls of Leicester. She was maid of honour to Queen Mary, and married Don Gomez Suarez de Figueroa y Cordova, Count of Feria, who came to England with King Philip, and was afterwards the first duke of Feria in Spain.* According to Haro, his love for her cost the duke somewhat of rank and fortune. His words are: "*De quien se avia enamorado y aficionado de tal manera, que escrivẽ, que por esta causa no sucedio en el estado y Marquesad de Priego, por no aver contrahido matrimonio con la Marquesa doña Catalina su sobrina, hija del sobredicho Conde don Pedro su hermano.*" †

With the exception of adapting the orthography to that of our own day, and amending the punctuation, the present reprint is a faithful copy of its original, carefully collated with the text in the collected works of 1557.

Mr. Mitford has recently ‡ rescued from oblivion the following epitaph on More by Henry Harder, from the *Deliciæ Poetarum Danorum*. This we here preserve; and conclude with the much more elegant tribute of the Jesuit Balde, the most estimable poet of his illustrious order.

Thomæ Mori Epitaphium.

Mori memento, quisquis hunc tumulum vides;
 Ille ille gentis tanta lux Britannicæ,
 Columenque voxque civium, Regis manus,
 Et purpuratorum alpha *Morus* præsidium,
 Charitum voluptas, dulce Musarum decus,
 Virtutis ara, terminus Constantiæ,
 Virque omnium, dum vixit, integerrimus.
 Hic ille *Morus* ille divisus jacet
 Iræ furentis immolatus principis.
 Poena quid ista fecerit dignum rogas?
 Age, arrige aures: ipse quamvis mortuus
 Tibi dicet ipse—nempe quid dicit? Nihil.

* Collins' Peerage, by Brydges, vii. 69.

† Nobiliario de España, i. 433.

‡ Gentleman's Mag. for April, 1846, p. 384.

THOMÆ MORI CONSTANTIA.

Hic ille Morus quo melius nihil
 Titan Britanno vidit ab æthere,
 Funesta cùm Regem Bolena
 Illicito furiasset æstu :

Audax iniquas spernere nuptias
 Amore veri, propositum minis
 Obvertit Henrici, tyranno
 Fortior, indocilisque flecti.

Non carcer illum, non Aloysia
 Dimovit uxor ; nec trepidus gener
 Nec ante Patrem Margarita
 Fœmineo lacrymosa questu.

Fertur monentem mitia conjugem,
 Sed non et isto digna viro, procul
 Abs se remotam, cum feroci,
 Ut fatuam, pepulisse risu.

Mox, quà fluentem se Thamesis rotat
 Ad destinatum funeribus locum,
 Casto coronandus triumpho,
 Per medios properavit Anglos.

Ductum secutâ flente Britannîâ,
 Non flevit unus ; marmore durior,
 Et certa despectante vultu
 Fata tuens, hilarisque torvùm.

Atqui sciebat, quid sibi regius
 Tortor parasset, non aliter tamen,
 Quàm laureatos Sulla fasceis,
 Ipse suam petiit securim.

Plenus futuri quo tumulo stetit,
 Postquam paventem carnificis manum,
 Mercede firmasset, cruento
 Colla dedit ferienda ferro.

Easter Monday, 1847.



A DIALOGVE

Of Cumfort

against Tribulation, made by

the right Vertuous, Wise and Learned

man, Sir Thomas More, sometime

L. Chancellor of England, which

he wrote in the Tower of

London, An. 1534,

and entituled

thus :

A Dialogue of Cumfort against Tribu=

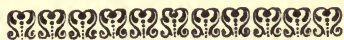
lation, made by an Hungarian in Latin, and

translated out of Latin into French, &

out of French into English.

Now newly set foorth, with many places restored

and corrected by conference of sundrie Copies.



Non desis plorantibus in consolatione. Eccli. 7.



ANTVERPIAE,

Apud Iohannem Foulerum, Anglum,

M. D. LXXIII.

*To the Right Honourable and Excellent Lady, the
Lady Jane, Duchess of Feria.*



HEREAS I was so bold the last year, to dedicate to your Honour a little Treatise of mine own translating, not worthy indeed to come forth under the name of so noble a patroness, whereby I might seem, not to apply any deed or gift of mine toward the honour or service of your Grace, but rather to use the name of your honourable personage for the better commendation and setting forth of that small labour of mine: to amend that fault and boldness committed then, I thought good now to present unto your Grace, not any better gift of mine own (as being yet not able to give any that is ought worth), but surely an excellent gift of another man's device and making, which both hath done, doth, and shall do much good to many other good folk, and to your noble Grace also. For though I know right well, that the same hath been seen and perused of your Honour many times before now, and that you have yet, and many years have had the same lying by you: yet both by myself, and by other also, I know, that how oft soever a man have read the same, yet as oft shall he need to read it again. And though he both have and do still read it again and again, he shall yet take profit more and more by it, and always shall have need, while he liveth here, to have oft recourse thereunto. And that may well appear in this present case of your Honour, who in this long mourning for the lack and loss of your right worthy and most noble husband, my

good Lord the Duke's Grace, cannot, I suppose, anywhere find the like ease of your heaviness and comfort for the sole and sad estate of your virtuous widowhood, as here out of this book may be taken, both for that, and for any other worldly woes and afflictions.

These six or seven years have I been desirous to have so good a book come forth again in some smaller volume than it was in before, being indeed not so handsome for the private use and commodity of the reader, as I trust it shall be now. But it hath not been my chance, through one let or other, to accomplish that desire of mine till now. And that is indeed the chief thing that I have done therein, which I may account as mine: I mean, in that I have brought it into this small volume, and withal, by conferring of sundry copies together, have restored and corrected many places, and thereby made it much more plain and easy to be understood of the reader. All which small labour of mine I beseech your Honour to accept in good part, as of him that would be right glad, not only by this or any mean to testify alway my good heart and affection toward the noble Duke, both while he lived and still after his decease, but also to do likewise to your Grace, and to your Noble Son (being his father's own heir both of estate and worthy qualities) any such service, as my poor ability can anywise achieve. And thus commending myself in all humble manner unto your Grace, I shall remain, as before, bound alway to pray for the good health and long life of your Honour, and of your no less dear than noble son, whom in his father's place I take still for my good Lord also. From Antwerp, the last of September. An. 1573.

Your Grace's most humble servitor,

JOHN FOWLER.

TO THE READER.



If the whole life of man be a continual warfare upon earth, as God's own word doth witness,* and as our own experience doth daily prove the same, and that man himself born of a woman, is indeed a wo man, that is, full of wo and misery, even from the first hour of his birth, to the very last moments of his life,† at which time he suffereth the extremest wo and most pinching pain of all, in parting from his own natural body, that he naturally loveth so well: how great need have we to provide and have ready alway some good armour and weapon in this our long warfare, and not to be without some relief and succour against so many miseries as we be subject unto.

To make any particular discourse of all the sundry sorrows and woes that appertain to each state, both of men and women, of young and old, sick and whole, rich and poor, high and low, subject and prince, and king and queen and all; it would be too long a business, and shall not need at this present, referring the knowledge and remembrance thereof to each person in his degree, as he daily and hourly feeleth the same.

For though that some there be, that neither feel nor know their own miseries, and yet live in most misery of all, whereof the common proverb saith, that such as are in hell think there is none other heaven; and as in very

* Job vii.

† Idem xiv.

deed many folk of this world take and ween this to be their heaven, because they know none other yet (and other shall they never know here, but by faith*) yet, be we never so blind in seeing and knowing our own most miseries, we have for all that other miseries besides so many and so great, that there is no creature so happy here on earth, but that one way or other, at some time or other, he seeth and feeleth sorrow and wo enough. And though that perhaps to other folk he seem to live in all worldly wealth and bliss, yet himself knoweth best what him aileth most, and as another proverb also saith, Each man knoweth well where his own shoe wringeth him.

And albeit that commonly the best folk suffer most afflictions in this world, as being most hated of the world, and best beloved of God, who reserveth for them in another world the crown of eternal bliss,† and for the evils that they endure here, doth reward them with good things there: yet the common sort of folk, yea and the very worst and most wicked too, have likewise their kinds of afflictions and miseries, and do not lack their worldly woes, which vex them otherwhiles even at the very hearts as much, and more, than any other tribulations, either inward or outward, do molest the minds of the virtuous and good.

If these miseries be so common and so general unto all, what ought all folk generally to provide for, but remedy and comfort against the same? And if the infection of this pestilent malady of man be such and so sore, that it letteth none scape long without it, but visiteth each body by some mean or other, wherever they dwell, and what air soever they live and rest in, what great cause have we, that cannot avoid this contagious air, but must needs lead our lives in it, and thereby fall sick now and then, to seek some good preservatives against such an universal plague, or at least some good comfortatives for the heart and brains and principal parts of us, that we be not so stricken upon the sudden, but that we may temper the rage of this disease, and overcome the danger of it, to the recovery of our health and final salvation!

* Hebr. xi.

† Esai. vi. ; 1 Cor. ii.

I would verily believe, these things well pondered, that is, both the general estate of man's misery and pain, and the great necessity of comfort which as generally followeth therewithal, that, whereas many books have and do come forth daily, that tend toward some benefit or other unto man, yet scant any can appear, the profit whereof is so great and extendeth so far, as of this.

The invention indeed of the author seemeth to respect some particular cases, which was of him wonderful wittily devised, applying his whole discourse to the peace of Christendom, to wit, the land of Hungary, which hath been there many years (and yet is) sore persecuted and oppressed by Turks. But under this particular case of Turks' persecutions he generally comprehendeth all kinds of afflictions and persecutions both of body and mind, that may any way be suffered, either by sickness or health, by friend or foe, by wicked and wrongful oppressors, by miscreants and Turks, and the very fiends and devils of hell also. And that was done for this intent (as it may seem) that under this one kind of Turkish persecution, the benefit of the book might be the more common to all Christian folk, as the which could justly of none be rejected nor reproved, but if themselves were very Turks too, or worse. And yet I trow, no Turk is so cruel and fell, that will or can let a poor Christian man in the midst of all his afflictions put upon him by the same Turk, to seek and use some comfort, in his case, such as he may.

Howbeit this book is also such, and so generally profitable, and so charitably written and devised to the behoof of all, that both good and bad, Christian and heathen, Jew and gentile, and the very Turks too, in that they be mortal men and subject to worldly miseries, may if they would read and use it, pick out many good counsels and comforts, whereby to ease themselves also in their most adversities. For sometime the chance is turned, and it fortunes as well the Turks to be taken prisoners by the Christians, as the Christians are taken and persecuted by them.

And surely if Turks understood the language, and per-

ceived well the general commodity of the book, whatsoever the common sort and furious multitude of them would do for their accustomed malice and envy against all benefit of the Christian, yet (no doubt) a man should find some good member of them so tractable and indifferent, that would for their own sakes in considering of their own need, and the general condition of all men, neither gainsay their Christian captives to seek them some ease in their misery, nor yet refuse themselves, to use (from among the rest) such comforts here and there as may serve their own turns. For we see that even in the midst of their own countries they suffer many Christian folk to dwell, paying certain tributes and taxes for their safeguard and sufferance to live there. And in other countries also which they newly subdue and win from the Christians, they do not so dispeople the whole lands and main countries, but that they let many thousands dwell there still, professing openly and freely their faith, with churches and chapels allowed for them: this only provided, that they agnize the Turk to be lord of the land, and themselves to live in quiet and civil subjection under him.

But blessed be God, that the Turks themselves, though they have overrun almost all Hungary, and thereto won Cyprus of late, are far enough off from us yet: and would God all their Turkish fashions and persecutions were as far off from us too, and that Christian charity did reign more truly and plentifully in the hearts of all that bear the name of Christians in Christendom. For then a great part of the comforts that are in this book, should not greatly need, nor we should not greatly need neither to fear lest any Christian folk would shew themselves so unchristian, as to find fault or mislike with the use and free having of the same among all men, whereas the matter and argument thereof toucheth men all so near.

Howbeit very few shall be found here in our quarters (by all likelihood) that have so much degenerated from the nature of true Christianity, as expressly to disannul or disallow the same, lest they might thereby seem, not only to be no Christians at all, but rather right renegades, which are indeed much worse than any natural Turks.

For as for all such as profess the Gospel and favour the truth of God's word, they must needs of fine force both think well hereof, and also allow and command the reading and perusing of the same among all good Christian people, whereas there is in manner nothing therein, but that is taken out of the very Scripture, out of God's own written word, and altogether treateth of faith, and of the principal points thereof. Wherefore (to conclude) there is no more to say, but only to wish unto all men generally, that as their own need and adversity shall move them to seek for some ease and comfort in their case, if it be their chance to light upon this book, they may so look thereon, and find such benefit and relief thereby, as may be most God's pleasure and quiet of their minds.



A DIALOGUE

OF

COMFORT AGAINST TRIBULATION.

A Dialogue of Comfort against Tribulation, made by the right virtuous, wise, and learned man, Sir Thomas More, sometime Lord Chancellor of England.

ANTONY AND VINCENT.



VINCENT.—Who would have weened, oh! my good uncle, afore a few years passed, that such as in this country would visit their friends lying in disease and sickness, should come, as I do now, to seek and fetch comfort of them; or, in giving comfort to them, use the way that I may well use to you? For albeit that the priests and friars be wont to call upon sick men to remember death; yet we worldly friends, for fear of discomforting them, have ever had a guise in Hungary, to lift up their hearts and put them in good hope of life. But now, my good uncle, the world

A notable saying, and as true now as ever. is here waxen such, and so great perils appear here to fall at hand; that methinketh the greatest comfort that a man can have is, when he may see that he shall soon be gone. And we that are likely long to live here in wretchedness, have need of some comfortable counsel against tribulation, to be given us by such as you be, good uncle, that have so long lived virtuously, and are so learned in the law of God, as very few be better in this country here, and have had of such things as we do now fear, good experience and assay in yourself; as he that hath been taken prisoner in Turkey two times in your days, and now likely to depart hence ere long. But that may be your great comfort, good uncle, sith you depart to God; but us here shall you leave of your kindred, a sort of sorry, comfortless orphans, to all whom your good help, comfort and counsel hath long been a great stay; not as an uncle unto some, and to some farther of kin, but as though that unto us all you had been a natural father.

ANTONY.—Mine own good cousin,* I cannot much say nay, but that there is indeed, not here in Hungary only, but almost also in all places of Christendom, a customable manner of unchristian comforting, which albeit that in any sick man it doth more harm than good, withdrawing him in time of sickness, with looking and longing for life, from the meditation of death, judgment, heaven and hell, whereof he should beset much part of his time, even all his whole life in his best health; yet is that manner in my mind more than mad, where such kind of comfort is used to a man of mine age. For, as we well wot, that a young man may die soon; so we be very sure that an old man cannot live long. And yet sith there is, as Tully † saith, no man for all that so old, but that he hopeth yet that he may live one year more, and of a frail folly delighteth thereon to think, and comforteth himself therewith; other men's words of like manner comfort, adding more sticks to that fire, shall in a manner burn up quite the pleasant moisture that most should refresh him; the wholesome dew

* This word was anciently applied to a kinsman generally.

† Cicero de Senectute.

(I mean) of God's grace, by which he should wish with God's will to be hence, and long to be with him in heaven.

Now where you take my departing from you so heavily, as of him of whom you recognize of your goodness to have had herebefore help and comfort; would God I had to you and other more half so much done, as myself reckoneth had been my duty to do. But whensoever God take me hence, to reckon yourselves then comfortless, as though your chief comfort stood in me, therein make you (methinketh) a reckoning very much like as though you would cast away a strong staff and lean upon a rotten reed. For God is, and must be your comfort, and not I. And he is a sure comforter, that (as he said unto his disciples)* never leaveth his servants in case of comfortless orphans, not even when he departeth from his disciples by death; but both, as he promised,† sent them a comforter, the Holy Spirit of his Father and himself, and them also made sure, that to the world's end, he would ever dwell with them himself. And, therefore, if you be part of his flock, and believe his promise, how can you be comfortless in any tribulation, when Christ and his Holy Spirit, and with them their inseparable Father (if you put full trust and confidence in them) be never neither one finger breadth of space, nor one minute of time from you?

VINCENT.—Oh! my good uncle, even these same self words, wherewith you well prove that because of God's own gracious presence we cannot be left comfortless, make me now feel and perceive what a miss of much comfort we shall have when you be gone. For albeit, good uncle, that while you do tell me this, I cannot but grant it for true; yet if I now had not heard it of you, I had not remembered it, nor it had not fallen in my mind. And over that, like as our tribulations shall in weight and number increase, so shall we need, not only such a good word or twain, but a great heap thereof, to stable and strength the walls of our hearts against the great scourges of this tempestuous sea.

* John xiv.

† Matth. ult.

ANTONY.—Good cousin, trust well in God, and he shall provide you teachers abroad convenient in every time, or else shall himself sufficiently teach you within.

VINCENT.—Very well, good uncle; but yet if we would leave the seeking of outward learning, where we may have it, and look to be inwardly taught only by God, then should we thereby tempt God, and displease him. And sith that I now see likelihood, that when you be gone, we shall be sore destitute of any such other like; therefore thinketh me that God of duty bindeth me to sue to you now, good uncle, in this short time that we have you, that it may like you, against these great storms of tribulation, with which both I and all mine are sore beaten already, and now, upon the coming of this cruel Turk, fear to fall in far more; I may learn of you such plenty of good counsel and comfort, that I may with the same laid up in remembrance, govern and stay the ship of our kindred, and keep it afloat from peril of spiritual drowning. You be not ignorant, good uncle, what heaps of heaviness hath of late fallen among us already, with which some of our poor family be fallen into such dumps, that scantily can any such comfort, as my poor wit can give them, any thing assuage their sorrow. And now sith these tidings have come hither so brim of the great Turk's enterprise into these parts here, we can almost neither talk, nor think of any other thing else, than of his might and our mischief; there falleth so continually before the

To this persecution of the Turks may well be resembled the whole practice of heretics in any place where they can prevail.

eyen of our heart a fearful imagination of this terrible thing, his mighty strength and power, his high malice and hatred, and his incomparable cruelty, with robbing, spoiling, burning, and laying waste all the way that his army cometh. Then killing or carrying away the people far thence, far from home, and there sever the couples and the kindred asunder, every one far from other; some kept in thralldom, and some kept in prison, and some for a triumph tormented and killed in his presence. Then send his people hither and his false faith therewith, so that such as here are and remain still shall either both lose all and be lost too, or forced to forsake the faith of

our Saviour Christ, and fall to the sect of Mahomet. And yet (which we more fear than all the remanent) no small part of our folk that dwell even here about us are (as we fear) falling to him, or already confedered with him; which, if it so be, shall haply keep this quarter from the Turk's incursion. But then shall they that turn to his law leave all their neighbours nothing, but shall have our good given them and our bodies both; but if we turn as they do, and forsake our Saviour too; and then (for there is no born Turk so cruel to Christian folk as is the false Christian that falleth from the faith) we shall stand in peril if we persevere in the truth, to be more hardly handled and die more cruel death by our own countrymen at home, than if we were taken hence and carried into Turkey. These fearful heaps of perils lie so heavy at our hearts, while we wot not into which we shall fortune to fall, and therefore fear all the worst, that (as our Saviour prophesied of the people of Jerusalem)* many wish among us already before the peril come, that the mountains would overwhelm them, or the valleys open and swallow them up and cover them. Therefore, good uncle, against these horrible fears of these terrible tribulations, of which some, ye wot well, our house already hath, and the remanent stand in dread of, give us, while God lendeth you us, such plenty of your comfortable counsel as I may write and keep with us, to stay us when God shall call you hence.

The false
Christian most
cruel enemy to
Christian
folk.

ANTONY.—Ah! my good cousin, this is an heavy hearing, and likewise as we that dwell here in this part fear that thing sore now, which few years past feared it not at all; so doubt I, that ere it long be, they shall fear it as much that think themselves now very sure, because they dwell farther off. Greece feared not the Turk when that I was born, and within a while after, the whole empire was his. The great Soudan of Syria thought himself more than his match, and long since you were born, hath he that empire too. Then hath he taken Bel-

How true is
this proved by
the breaking
out of heresy
from out of
Germany into
other countries
&c.

* Luke xxiii.

grade, the fortress of this realm, and since hath he destroyed our noble young goodly king. And now strive there twain for us: our Lord send the grace that the third dog carry not away the bone from them both! What should I speak of the noble strong city of the Rhodes, the winning whereof he counted as a victory against the whole corps of Christendom, sith all Christendom was not able to defend that strong town against him? Howbeit, if the princes of Christendom everywhere about would, where as need was, have set to their hands in time, the Turk had never taken any one of all those places. But partly dissensions fallen among ourself, partly that no man careth what harm other folk feel, but each part suffereth other to shift for itself, the Turk is in few years wonderfully increased, and Christendom on the other side very sore decayed: and all this worketh our wickedness, with which God is not content.

But now, whereas you desire of me some plenty of comfortable things which ye may put in remembrance, and comfort therewith your company; verily in the rehearsing and heaping of your manifold fears, myself began to feel, that there should much need against so many troubles many comfortable counsels. For surely a little before your coming, as I devised with myself upon the Turk's coming, it happened my mind to fall suddenly from that into the devising upon my own departing: wherein, albeit that I fully put my trust and hope to be a saved soul by the great mercy of God, yet sith no man is here so sure that without revelation may clean stand out of dread, I bethought me also upon the pain of hell. And after, I bethought me then upon the Turk again. And first methought his terror nothing, when I compared it with the joyful hope of heaven. Then compared I it on the other side with the fearful dread of hell. And therein casting in my mind those terrible devilish tormentors, with the deep consideration of that furious endless fire; methought, that if the Turk with his whole host, and all his trumpets and timbrels too, were to kill me in my bed coming to my chamber door, in respect of the

All that is said
of the Turk is
in a parable
meant of here-
tics and schis-
matics.

other reckoning I regard him not a rush. And yet when I now heard your lamentable words, laying forth as it were present before my face the heap of heavy sorrowful tribulation, that beside those that are already fallen, are in short space like to follow, I waxed therewith myself suddenly somewhat affright.

And therefore I well allow your request in this behalf that you would have store of comfort aforehand ready by you to resort to, and to lay up in your heart as a triacle against the poison of all desperate dread that might rise of occasion of sore tribulation. And herein shall I be glad, as my poor wit will serve me, to call to mind with you such things, as I before have read, heard, or thought upon, that may conveniently serve us to this purpose.

CHAPTER I.

That the Comforts devised by the old Paynim Philosophers were insufficient, and the cause wherefore.



*The cause of
tribulation.*

FIRST shall you, good cousin, understand this, that the natural wise men of this world, the old moral philosophers, laboured much in this matter, and many natural reasons have they written, whereby they might encourage men to set little by such goods, or such trusts either, the going or the coming whereof are the matter and the cause of tribulation: as are the goods of fortune, riches, favour, friends, fame, worldly worship, and such other things; or of the body, as beauty, strength, agility, quickness, and health. These things (ye wot well) coming to us, are matter of worldly wealth; and taken from us by fortune, or by force, or by fear of losing them, be matter of adversity and tribulation.

What tribulation is generally.

For tribulation seemeth generally to signify nothing else but some kind of grief, either pain of the body or heaviness of the mind. Now the body not to feel that it feeleth, all the wit in the world cannot bring about. But that the mind should not be grieved, neither with the pain that the body feeleth nor with occasions of heaviness offered and given unto the soul itself, this thing laboured the philosophers very much about, and many goodly sayings have they toward the strength and comfort against tribulation, exciting men to the full contempt of all worldly loss, and despising of sickness, and all bodily grief, painful death and all. Howbeit in very deed, for any thing that ever I read in them, I never could yet find that ever those natural reasons

were able to give sufficient comfort of themself. For they never stretch so far, but that they leave untouched, for lack of necessary knowledge, that special point which is not only the chief comfort of all, but, without which also, all other comforts are nothing: that is, to wit, the referring of the final end of their comfort unto The chief and special comfort. God, and to repute and take for the special cause of comfort, that by the patient sufferance of their tribulation they shall attain his favour, and for their pain receive reward at his hand in heaven. And for lack of knowledge of this end, they did (as they needs must) leave untouched also the very special mean, without which we can never attain to this comfort; that is, to wit, the gracious aid and help of God to move, stir, and guide us forward, in the referring The special mean of all comfort. all our ghostly comfort, yea, and our worldly comfort too, all unto that heavenly end. And therefore, as I say, for the lack of these things, all their comfortable counsels are very far insufficient. Howbeit, though they be far unable to cure our disease of themself, and therefore are not sufficient to be taken for our physicians, some good drugs have they yet in their shops, for which they may be suffered to dwell among our apothecaries, if their medicines be not made of their own brains, but after the bills made by the great physician God, prescribing the medicines himself, and correcting the faults of their erroneous receipts. For without this way taken with them, they shall not fail to do, as many bold blind apothecaries do, which either for lucre, or of a foolish pride, give sick folk medicines of their own devising, and therewith kill up in corners many such simple folk, as they find so foolish to put their lives in such lewd and unlearned blind bayards' hands.

We shall, therefore, neither fully receive these philosophers' reasons in this matter, nor yet utterly refuse them; but using them in such order as shall beseem them, the principal and the effectual medicines against these diseases of tribulation shall we fetch from that high, great and excellent physician, without whom we could never be healed of our very deadly disease of damnation. For

our necessity wherein, the Spirit of God spiritually speaketh of himself to us, and biddeth us of all our health give him the honour; and therein thus saith to us, *Honora medicum; propter necessitatem etenim ordinavit eum Altissimus*,*—Honour thou the physician, for him hath the high God ordained for thy necessity. Therefore, let us require the high physician, our blessed Saviour Christ, whose holy manhood God ordained for our necessity, to cure our deadly wounds with the medicine made of the most wholesome blood of his own blessed body: that likewise as he cured by that incomparable medicine our mortal malady, it may like him to send us and put in our minds such medicines at this time, as against the sickness and sorrows of tribulations may so comfort and strength us in his grace, as our deadly enemy the devil may never have the power by his poisoned dart of murmur, grudge, and impatience, to turn our short sickness of worldly tribulation into the endless everlasting death of infernal damnation.

* Eccl. xxxviii.

CHAPTER II.

That for a foundation men must needs begin with Faith.



WITH all our principal comfort must come of God, we must first presuppose in him to whom we shall with any ghostly counsel give any effectual comfort, one ground to begin withal, whereupon all that we shall build must be supported and stand: that is, to wit, the ground and foundation of faith, without which had ready before, all the spiritual comfort that any man may speak of can never avail a fly. For likewise as it were utterly vain to lay natural reasons of comfort to him that hath no wit, so were it undoubtedly frustrate to lay spiritual causes of comfort to him that hath no faith. For except a man first believe that Holy Scripture is the word of God, and that the word of God is true, how can a man take any comfort of that that the Scriptures telleth him therein? Needs must the man take little fruit of the Scripture, if he either believe not that it were the word of God, or else ween that, though it were, it might yet be for all that untrue. This faith, as it is more faint, or more strong, so shall the comfortable words of Holy Scripture stand the man in more stead, or less.

Why faith is the foundation of all comfort.

The word of God is most true.

This virtue of faith can neither any man give himself, nor yet any one man another: but though men may with preaching be ministers unto God therein, and the man with his own free-will obeying freely the inward inspiration of God be a weak worker with Almighty God therein; yet is the faith indeed the gracious gift of God himself. For, as St. James saith, *Omne datum optimum,*

*et omne donum perfectum desursum est, descendens a patre luminum**—Every good gift and every perfect gift is given from above, descending from the Father of lights. Therefore, feeling our faith by many tokens very faint, let us pray to him that giveth it, that it may please him to help and increase it. And let us first say with the man in the Gospel, *Credo Domine, adjuva incredulitatem meam*—I believe, good Lord, but help thou the lack of my belief. And after, let us pray with the Apostles, *Domine, adauge nobis fidem*—Lord increase our faith. And, finally, let us consider by Christ's saying unto them, that if we would not suffer the strength and fervour of our faith to wax lukewarm, or rather key-cold, and in manner lose his vigour by scattering our minds abroad about so many trifling things, that of the matters of our faith we very seldom think, but that we would withdraw our thought from the respect and regard of all worldly fantasies, and so gather our faith together into a little narrow room, and like the little grain of a mustard seed,† which is of nature hot, set it in the garden of our soul, all weeds pulled out for the better feeding of our faith; then shall it grow, and so spread up in height, that the birds, that is, to wit, the holy angels of heaven, shall breed in our soul and bring forth virtues in the branches of our faith. And then with the faithful trust, that through the true belief of God's word we shall put in his promise, we shall be well able to command a great mountain‡ of tribulation to void from the place where it stood in our heart; whereas, with a very feeble faith and a faint, we shall be scant able to remove a little hillock. And, therefore, for the first conclusion, as we must of necessity before any spiritual comfort presuppose the foundation of faith; so sith no man can give us faith, but only God, let us never cease to call upon God therefore.

Prayer in tribulation must never cease.

VINCENT.—Forsooth, my good uncle, methinketh that this foundation of faith, which (as you say) must be laid first, is so necessarily requisite, that without it all

* Jacob. i.

† Matth. xvii.

‡ Mar. xi.

spiritual comfort were utterly given in vain. And, therefore, now shall we pray God for a full and a fast faith. And I pray you, good uncle, proceed you farther in the process of your matter of spiritual comfort against tribulation.

ANTONY.—That shall I, cousin, with good will.

CHAPTER III.

The first Comfort in Tribulation may a man take in this, when he feeleth in himself a desire and longing to be comforted by God.



WILL in my poor mind assign for the first comfort the desire and longing to be by God comforted. And not without some reason call I this the first cause of comfort. For like as the cure of that person is in a manner desperate, that hath no will to be cured; so is the discomfort of that person desperate, that desireth not his own comfort.

And here shall I note you two kinds of folk that are in tribulation and heaviness. One sort, that will seek for no comfort; another sort, that will. And yet of those that will not are there also two sorts. For first, one sort there are that are so drowned in sorrow, that they fall into a careless deadly dulness, regarding nothing, thinking almost of nothing, no more than if they lay in a lethargy, with which it may so fall that wit and remembrance will wear away, and fall even fair from them. And this comfortless kind of heaviness in tribulation is the highest kind of the deadly sin of sloth. Another sort are there that will seek for no comfort, nor yet none receive, but are in their tribulation (be it loss or sickness) so testy, so fumish, and so far out of all patience, that it booteth no man to speak to them: and these are in a manner with impatience as furious, as though they were in half a phrenzy, and may, with a custom of such fashioned behaviour, fall in thereto full and whole. And

this kind of heaviness in tribulation is even a mischievous high branch of the mortal sin of Ire.

Then is there, as I told you, another kind of folk, which fain would be comforted. And yet are they of two sorts too. One sort are those that in their sorrow seek for worldly comfort; and of them shall we now speak the less, for the divers occasions that we shall after have to touch them in more places than one. But this will I here say, that I learned of St. Bernard: He that in tribulation turneth himself unto worldly vanities, to get help and comfort by them, fareth like a man that in peril of drowning catcheth whatsoever cometh next to hand, and that holdeth he fast, be it never so simple a stick; but then that helpeth him not, for that stick he draweth down under the water with him, and there lie they drowned both together. So surely if we custom ourself to put our trust of comfort in the delight of these peevish worldly things, God shall for that foul fault suffer our tribulation to grow so great, that all the pleasures of this world shall never bear us up, but all our peevish pleasure shall in the depth of tribulation drown with us.

*The very end of
all vain worldly
comfort.*

The other sort is, I say, of those that long and desire to be comforted of God. And, as I told you before, they have an undoubted great cause of comfort, even in that point alone, that they consider themselves to desire and long to be by Almighty God comforted. This mind of theirs may well be cause of great comfort unto them for two great considerations. The one is, that they see themselves seek for their comfort where they cannot fail to find it. For God both can give them comfort, and will. He can, for he is almighty: he will, for he is all good, and hath himself promised, *Petite, et accipietis*—Ask, and ye shall have.* He that hath faith (as he must needs have that shall take comfort) cannot doubt, but that God will surely keep his promise. And therefore hath he a great cause to be of good comfort, as I say, in that he considereth, that he longeth to be comforted by him, which his faith maketh him sure will not fail to comfort him.

* Matth. vii.

But here consider this, that I speak here of him that in tribulation longeth to be comforted by God ; and it is he that referreth the manner of his comforting to God, holding himself content, whether it be by the taking away or the minishment of the tribulation itself, or by the giving him patience and spiritual consolation therein. For of him that only longeth to have God take his trouble from him, we cannot so well warrant that mind for a cause of so great comfort. For both may he desire that, that never mindeth to be the better ; and may miss also the effect of his desire, because his request is haply not good for himself. And of this kind of longing and requiring we shall have occasion farther to speak hereafter. But he which referring the manner of his comfort unto God, desireth of God to be comforted, asketh a thing so lawful and so pleasant unto God, that he cannot fail to speed : and therefore hath he (as I say) great cause to take comfort in the very desire itself.

Another cause hath he to take of that desire a very great occasion of comfort. For sith his desire is good, and declareth unto himself that he hath in God a good faith, it is a good token unto him that he is not an object cast out of God's gracious favour, while he perceiveth that God hath put such a virtuous well ordered appetite Whereof proceedeth each good or evil mind. in his mind. For as every evil mind cometh of the world, and ourself, and the devil ; so is every such good mind either immediately, or by the mean of our good angel, or other gracious occasion, inspired into man's heart by the goodness of God himself. And what a comfort then may this be unto us, when we by that desire perceive a sure undoubted token, that toward our final salvation our Saviour is himself so graciously busy about us.

CHAPTER IV.

That Tribulation is a mean to draw men to that good mind, to desire and long for the Comfort of God.



INCENT.—FORSOOTH, good uncle, this good mind of longing for God's comfort is a good cause of great comfort indeed: our Lord in tribulation send it us! But by this I see well, that wo may they be which in tribulation lack that mind, and that desire not to be comforted by God, but are either of sloth or impatience discomfortless, or of folly seek for their chief ease and comfort anywhere else.

ANTONY.—That is, good cousin, very true, as long as they stand in that state. But then must you consider, that tribulation is yet a mean to drive him from that state. And that is one of the causes for which God sendeth it unto man. For albeit that pain was ordained of God for the punishment of sins (for which Pain. they that can never now but sin, can never be but ever punished in hell), yet in this world, in which his high mercy giveth men space to be better, the punishment by tribulation that he sendeth, serveth ordinarily for a mean of amendment.

St. Paul * was himself sore against Christ, till Christ gave him a great fall and threw him to the ground, and strake him stark blind: and with that tribulation he turned to him at the first word, and God was his physician, and healed him soon after both in body and soul by his minister Ananias, and made him his blessed apostle.

* Act. ix.

Some are in the beginning of tribulation very stubborn and stiff against God, and yet at length tribulation bringeth them home. The proud king Pharaoh* did abide and endure two or three of the first plagues, and would not once stoop at them. But then God laid on a sorer lash that made him cry to him for help, and then sent he for Moses and Aaron,† and confessed himself a sinner, and God for good and righteous, and prayed them to pray for him, and to withdraw that plague, and he would let them go. But when his tribulation was withdrawn, then was he naught again. So was his tribulation occasion of his profit, and his help again cause of his harm. For his tribulation made him call to God, and his help made hard his heart again. Many a man that in an easy tribulation falleth to seek his ease in the pastime of worldly fantasies, findeth in a greater pain all those comforts so feeble, that he is fain to fall to the seeking of God's help. And therefore is, I say, the very tribulation itself many times a mean to bring the man to the taking of the afore-remembered comfort therein: that is, to wit, to the desire of comfort given by God, which desire of God's comfort is, as I have proved you, great cause of comfort itself.

* Exod. vii.

† Exod. viii.

CHAPTER V.

The special mean to get this first Comfort in Tribulation.



OWBEIT, though the tribulation itself be a mean oftentimes to get man this first comfort in it, yet itself sometime alone bringeth not a man to it. And therefore sith without this comfort first had, there can in tribulation none other good comfort come forth, we must labour the means that this first comfort may come. And thereunto seemeth me, that if the man of sloth, or impatience, or hope of worldly comfort, have no mind to desire and seek for comfort of God; those that are his friends that come to visit and comfort him must afore all things put that point in his mind, and not spend the time (as they commonly do) in trifling and turning him to the fantasies of the world. They must also move him to pray God put this desire in his mind, which when he getteth once he then hath the first comfort, and without doubt (if it be well considered), a comfort marvellous great. His friends also, that thus counsel him, must unto the attaining thereof help to pray for him themselves, and cause him to desire good folk to help him to pray therefor. And then, if these ways be taken for the getting, I nothing doubt but the goodness of God shall give it.

CHAPTER VI.

It sufficeth not that a man have a desire to be comforted by God only by the taking away of the Tribulation.



INCENT.—VERILY methinketh, good uncle, that this counsel is very good. For except the person have first a desire to be comforted by God, else can I not see what it can avail to give him any further counsel of any spiritual comfort. Howbeit, what if the man have this desire of God's comfort, that is to wit, that it may please God to comfort him in his tribulation by taking that tribulation from him; is not this a good desire of God's comfort, and a desire sufficient for him that is in tribulation?

ANTONY.—No, cousin, that is it not. I touched before a word of this point, and passed it over, because I thought it would fall in our way again, and so wot I well it will offer than once. And now am I glad that you move it me here yourself. A man may many times well and without sin desire of God the tribulation to be taken from him; but neither may we desire that in every case, nor yet very well in no case (except very few), but under a certain condition, either expressed or implied. For tribulations are (ye wot well) of many sundry kinds: some by loss of goods or possessions; some by the sickness of ourself, and some by the loss of friends, or by some other pain put unto our bodies; some by the dread of losing those things that we fain would save, under which fear fall all the same things that we have spoken before. For we may fear loss of goods or possessions, or the loss of our friends, their grief and

The divers
kinds of tribu-
lations.

trouble, or our own; by sickness, imprisonment, or other bodily pain we may be troubled with the dread of death, and many a good man is troubled most of all with the fear of that thing, which he that most need hath fearest least of all, that is to wit, the fear of losing through deadly sin the life of his silly soul. And this last kind of tribulation, as the sorest tribulation of all, though we touched here and there some pieces thereof before, yet the chief part and the principal point will I reserve, to treat apart effectually that matter in the last end.

But now, as I said, where the kinds of tribulation are so divers, some of these tribulations a man may pray God take from him, and take some comfort in the trust that God will so do. And therefore against hunger, sickness, and bodily hurt, and against the loss of either body or soul, men may lawfully many times pray to the goodness of God, either for themselves or their friend. And toward this purpose are expressly prayed many devout orisons in the common service of our Mother Holy Church. And toward our help in some of these things serve some of the petitions in the *Pater-noster*,* wherein we pray daily for our daily food, and to be preserved from the fall in temptation, and to be delivered from evil. But yet may we not alway pray for the taking away from us of every kind of temptation. For if a man should in every sickness pray for his health again, when should he shew himself content to die and to depart unto God? And that mind must a man have, ye wot well, or else it will not be well.

One tribulation is it to good men, to feel in themselves the conflict of the flesh against the soul, the rebellion of sensuality against the rule and governance of reason, the relics that remain in mankind of old original sin, of which St. Paul so sore complaineth in his Epistle to the Romans.† And yet may we not pray, while we stand in this life, to have this kind of tribulation utterly taken from us. For it is left us by God's ordinance to strive against it, and fight withal, and by reason and grace to master it, and use it for the matter of our merit. For the salvation of our soul may we boldly pray; for grace may we boldly

* Matth. vi.

† Rom. vii.

pray ; for faith, for hope, and for charity, and for every such virtue as shall serve us to heaven-ward. But as for all other things before remembered, in which is conceived the matter of every kind of tribulation, we may never well make prayers so precisely but that we must express or imply a condition therein ; that is to wit, that if God see the contrary better for us, we refer it whole to his will, and instead of our grief taking away, pray that God may send us of his goodness either spiritual comfort to take it gladly, or strength at leastwise to bear it patiently. For if we determine with ourself that we will take no comfort in nothing, but in the taking of our tribulation from us ; then either prescribe we to God, that we will he shall no better turn do us, though he would, than we will ourself appoint him ; or else do we declare that what thing is best for us, ourself can better tell than he.

And therefore, I say, let us in tribulation desire his comfort and help, and let us remit the manner of that comfort unto his own high pleasure ; which, when we do, let us nothing doubt, but that like as his high wisdom better seeth what is best for us than we can see ourself, so shall his high sovereign goodness give us that thing that shall indeed be best. For else if we will presume to stand to our own choice, except it so be that God offer us the choice himself (as he did to David in the choice of his own punishment, after his high pride conceived in the numbering of his people*), we may foolishly choose the worst ; and by the prescribing unto God ourself so precisely what we will that he shall do for us (except that of his gracious favour he reject our folly), he shall for indignation grant us our own request, and after shall we well find that it shall turn us to harm.

How many men attain health of body, that were better for their souls' health their bodies were sick still ! How many get out of prison, that hap on such harm abroad as the prison should have kept them from ! How many that have been loth to lose their worldly goods, have in keeping of their goods soon after lost their lives ! So blind is our mortality, and so unaware what will fall, so unsure also

* 2 Reg. xxiv.

what manner of mind we will have to-morrow, that God could not lightly do man a more vengeance than in this world to grant him his own foolish wishes. What wit have we (poor fools) to wit what will serve us, when the blessed Apostle himself in his sore tribulation,* praying thrice unto God to take it away from him, was answered again by God in a manner that he was but a fool in asking that request, but that the help of God's grace in that tribulation to strengthen him was far better for him, than to take the tribulation from him? And therefore, by experience perceiving well the truth of that lesson, he giveth us good warning not to be bold of our own minds when we require aught of God, nor to be precise in our askings, but refer the choice to God at his own pleasure. For his own Holy Spirit so sore desireth our weal, that, as men say, he groaneth for us in such wise as no tongue can tell. *Nos autem* (saith St. Paul)† *quid oremus ut oportet, nescimus; sed ipse Spiritus postulat pro nobis gemitibus inenarrabilibus*,—We, what we may pray for that were behoveable for us, cannot ourself tell: but the Spirit himself desireth for us with unspeakable groanings.

And therefore, I say, for conclusion of this point, let us never ask of God precisely our own ease by delivering us from our tribulation, but pray for his aid and comfort, by which ways himself shall best like; and then may we take comfort, even of our such request. For both be we sure that this mind cometh of God, and also be we very sure that as he beginneth to work with us, so (but if ourself flit from him) he will not fail to tarry with us; and then, he dwelling with us, what trouble can do us harm? *Si Deus pro nobis, quis contra nos?*—If God be with us (saith St. Paul), who can stand against us?‡

* 2 Cor. xii.

† Rom. viii.

‡ Rom. viii.

CHAPTER VII.

A great Comfort it may be in Tribulation, that every Tribulation is, if we ourself will, a thing either medicinal or else more than medicinal.



VINCENT.—You have, good uncle, well opened and declared the question that I demanded you, that is to wit, what manner of comfort a man might pray for in tribulation. And now proceed forth, good uncle, and shew us yet farther some other spiritual comfort in tribulation.

ANTONY.—This may be, thinketh me, good cousin, great comfort in tribulation, that every tribulation which any time falleth unto us is either sent to be medicinal, if men will so take it; or may become medicinal, if men will make of it; or is better than medicinal, but if we will forsake it.

VINCENT.—Surely, this is very comfortable, if we may well perceive it.

ANTONY.—These three things that I tell you, we shall consider thus. Every tribulation that we fall in, cometh either by our own known deserving deed bringing us thereunto, as the sickness that followeth our intemperate surfeit, or the prisonment or other punishment put upon a man for his heinous crime; or else is it sent us by God without any certain deserving cause open and known unto ourself, either for punishment of some sins past (certainly we know not for which), or for preserving us from some sins, in which we were else like to fall, or, finally, for no respect of the man's sin at all, but for the proof of his patience and increase of his merit. In all the former cases tribulation is (if he will) medicinal: in this last case of all it is better than medicinal.

CHAPTER VIII.

The declaration larger concerning them that fall in Tribulation by their own known fault, and that yet such Tribulation is medicinable.



INCENT.—THIS seemeth me very good, good uncle, saving that it seemeth somewhat brief and short, and thereby methinketh somewhat obscure and dark.

ANTONY.—We shall therefore, to give it light withal, touch every member somewhat more at large. One member is, you wot well, of them that fall in tribulation through their own certain well-deserving deed open and known unto themselves, as where we fall in a sickness following upon our own gluttonous feasting, or a man that is punished for his own open fault. These tribulations, lo! and such other like, albeit that they may seem uncomfortable, in that a man may be sorry to think himself the cause of his own harm; yet hath he good cause of comfort in them, if he consider that he may make them medicinable for himself, if he himself will. For whereas there was due to that sin (except it were purged here) a far greater punishment after this world in another place; this worldly tribulation of pain and punishment, by God's good provision for him put upon him here in this world before, shall by the mean of Christ's passion (if the man will in true faith and good hope, by meek and patient sufferance of his tribulation, so make it), serve him for a sure medicine, to cure him and clearly discharge him of all the sickness and disease of those pains, that else he should suffer after.

For such is the great goodness of Almighty God, that he punisheth not one thing twice. And albeit so, that this punishment is put unto the man, not of his own

election and free choice, but so by force as he would fain avoid it, and falleth in it against his will, and therefore seemeth worthy no thank; yet so far passeth the great goodness of God the poor imperfect goodness of man, that though men make their reckoning one here with another such, God yet of his high bounty in man's account toward him alloweth it far otherwise. For though that otherwise a man fall in his pain by his own fault, and also first against his will, yet as soon as he confesseth his fault, and applieth his will to be content to suffer that pain and punishment for the same, and waxeth sorry, not for that only that he shall sustain such punishment, but for that also that he hath offended God, and thereby deserved much more: our Lord from that time counteth it not for pain taken against his will, but it shall be a marvellous good medicine and work (as a willingly taken pain) the purgation and cleansing of his soul, with gracious remission of his sin, and of the far greater pain that else had been prepared therefor peradventure in hell for ever. For many there are undoubtedly, that would else drive forth and die in their deadly sin, which yet in such tribulation, feeling their own frailty so effectually, and the false flattering world failing them so fully, turn goodly to God and call for mercy, and by grace make virtue of necessity, and make a medicine of their malady, taking their trouble meekly, and make a right godly end.

Consider well the story of Achan, that committed sacrilege at the great city of Hierico, whereupon God took a great vengeance upon the children of Israel, and after told them the cause, and bade them go seek the fault and try it out by lots; when the lot fell upon the very man that did it, being tried by the falling first upon his tribe, and then upon his house, and finally upon his person, he might well see that he was deprehended and taken against his will, but yet, at the good exhortation of Josue,* saying unto him, *Fili mi, da gloriam Domino Deo Israel, et confitere, ac indica mihi quid feceris, ne abscondas*,—Mine own son, give glory to the Lord God of Israel, and con-

* Josue vii.

fess, and shew me what thou hast done, hide it not;—he confessed humbly the theft and meekly took his death therefor, and had, I doubt not, both strength and comfort in his pain, and died a very good man: which, if he had never come in tribulation, had been in peril never haply to have had just remorse thereof in all his whole life, but might have died wretchedly, and gone to the devil eternally. And thus made this thief a good medicine of his well-deserved pain and tribulation. Consider the well-converted thief that hung on Christ's right hand.* Did not he (by his meek sufferance and humble knowledge of his fault, asking forgiveness of God, and yet content to suffer for his sin) make of his just punishment and well-deserved tribulation a very good special medicine to cure him of all pain in the other world, and win him eternal salvation? And thus, I say, that this kind of tribulation, though it seem the most base and the least comfortable, is yet (if the man will so make it) a very marvellous wholesome medicine; and may therefore be to the man that will so consider it, a great cause of comfort and spiritual consolation.

* Lucæ xxiii.

CHAPTER IX.

The second point, that is to wit, of that Tribulation that is sent us by God, without any open certain deserving cause known to ourself, and that this kind of Tribulation is medicinable, if men will so take it, and therefore great occasion of Comfort.



INCENT.—VERILY, mine uncle, this first kind of tribulation have you to my mind opened sufficiently, and therefore I pray you resort now to the second.

ANTONY.—The second kind was, you wot well, of such tribulation as is so sent us by God, that we know no certain cause deserving the present trouble, as we certainly know that upon such a pursuit we fall in such a sickness; or as the thief knoweth that for such a certain theft he is fallen into such a certain punishment. But yet sith we seldom lack faults against God, worthy and well deserving great punishment: indeed we may well think, and wisdom it is so to do, that with sin we have deserved it, and that God for some sin sendeth it, though we certainly know not ourself for which. And, therefore, as yet thus far forth is this kind of tribulation somewhat in effect in comfort to be taken like unto the other: for this, as you see, if we thus will take it, well reckoning it to be sent for sin, and suffering it meekly therefor, is medicinable against the pain in the other world to come for our sins in this world past, which is, as I shewed you, a cause of right great comfort. But yet may then this kind of tribulation be to some men of more sober living, and thereby of the more clear conscience, somewhat a little more comfortable. For though they may none otherwise reckon themselves than sinners (for as St. Paul saith,* *Nihil mihi conscius sum, sed non*

* 1 Cor. iv.

in hoc justificatus sum,—My conscience grudgeth me not of any thing, but yet am I not thereby justified; and as St. John saith,* *Si dixerimus, quin peccatum non habemus, ipsi nos seducimus et veritas in nobis non est*,—If we say that we have no sin in us, we beguile ourself, and truth is there not in us), yet forasmuch as the cause is to them not so certain, as it is to the other afore remembered in the first kind, and that it is also certain, that God sometime sendeth tribulation for keeping and preserving a man from such sin as he should else fall in, and sometime also for exercise of patience and increase of merit, great cause of increase in comfort have those folk of the clearer conscience in the fervour of their tribulation, in that they may take the comfort of double medicine, and of that is the kind which we shall finally speak of that I call better than medicinable. But as I have before spoken of this kind of tribulation, how it is medicinable in that it cureth the sin past, and purchaseth remission of the pain due therefor; so let us somewhat consider, how this tribulation sent us by God is medicinable, in that it preserve thus from the sins into which we were else like to fall.

If that thing be a good medicine that restoreth us our health when we lose it; as good a medicine must this needs be that preserveth our health while we have it, and suffereth us not to fall into the painful sickness that must after drive us to a painful plaster. Now seeth God sometime that worldly wealth is with one (that is yet good) coming upon him so fast, that foreseeing how much weight of worldly wealth the man may bear, and how much will overcharge him, and enhance his heart up so high that grace shall fall from him low; God of his goodness, I say, preventeth his fall, and sendeth him tribulation by time while he is yet good, to gar him ken his Maker, and by less liking the false flattering world, set a cross upon the ship of his heart, and bear a low sail thereon, that the boisterous blast of pride blow him not under the water.

Some young lovely lady, lo! that is yet good enough,

* 1 Joan. i.

Another example no less merrily than truly brought in. God seeth a storm come toward her, that would (if her health and her fat feeding should a little longer last) strike her into some lecherous love, and, instead of her old acquainted knight, lay her abed with a new acquainted knave. But God loving her more tenderly than to suffer her fall into such shameful beastly sin, sendeth her in season a goodly fair fervent fever, that maketh her bones to rattle, and wasteth away her wanton flesh, and beautifieth her fair fell with the colour of a kite's claw, and maketh her look so lovely, that her lover would have little lust to look upon her, and make her also so lusty, that if her lover lay in her lap, she should so sore long to break unto him the very bottom of her stomach, that she should not be able to refrain it from him, but suddenly lay it all in his neck.

Did not (as I before shewed you) the blessed Apostle himself confess,* that the high revelation that God had given him, might have enhanced him into such high pride that he might have caught a foul fall, had not the provident goodness of God provided for his remedy? And what was his remedy, but a painful tribulation, so sore that he was fain thrice to call to God to take the tribulation from him: and yet would not God grant his request, but let him lie so long therein, till himself, that saw more in St. Paul than St. Paul saw in himself, wist well the time was come in which he might well without his harm take it from him. And thus you see, good cousin, that tribulation is double medicine, both a cure of the sin past and a preservative from the sin that is to come. And therefore in this kind of tribulation is there good occasion of a double comfort; but that is (I say) diversly to sundry divers folks, as their own conscience is with sin cumbered or clear. Howbeit I will advise no man to be so bold as to think that their tribulation is sent them to keep them from the pride of their holiness. Let men leave that kind of comfort hardly to St. Paul till their living be like; but of the remnant may men well take great comfort and good beside.

* 2 Cor. xii.

CHAPTER X.

Of the third kind of Tribulation, which is not sent a man for his sin, but for exercise of his patience and increase of his merit, which is better than medicinable.



TINCENT.—THE third kind, uncle, that remaineth now behind, that is to wit, which is sent a man by God, and not for his sin neither committed nor which would else come, and therefore is not medicinable but sent for exercise of our patience and increase of our merit, and therefore better than medicinable: though it be as you say, and as indeed it is, better for the man than any of the other two kinds in another world, where the reward shall be received: yet can I not see by what reason a man may in this world, where the tribulation is suffered, take any more comfort therein than in any of the other twain that are sent a man for his sin; sith he cannot here know whether it be sent him for sin before committed, or sin that else should fall, or for increase of merit and reward after to come; namely, sith every man hath cause enough to fear and think that his sin already past hath deserved it, and that it is not without peril a man to think otherwise.

ANTONY.—This that you say, cousin, hath place of truth in far the most part of men, and therefore must they not envy nor disdain (sith they may take in their tribulation consolation for their part sufficient) that some other that more be worthy, take yet a great deal more. For, as I told you, cousin, though the best man must confess himself a sinner, yet be there many men (though to the

multitude few) that for the kind of their living, and thereby the clearness of their conscience, may well and without sin have a good hope that God sendeth them some great grief for exercise of their patience, and for increase of their merit; as it appeareth, not only by St. Paul* in the place before remembered, but also by the holy man Job,† which in sundry places of his dispicions with his burdenous comforters letted not to say, that the clearness of his own conscience declared and shewed to himself that he deserved not that sore tribulation that he then had. Howbeit, as I told you before, I will not advise every man at a venture to be bold upon this manner of comfort. But yet some men know I such, as I durst (for their more ease and comfort in their great and grievous pains) put them in right good hope, that God sendeth it unto them not so much for their punishment, as for exercise of their patience. And some tribulations are there also that grow upon such causes, that in these cases I would never let, but always would without any doubt give that counsel and comfort to any man.

VINCENT.—What causes, good uncle, be those?

ANTONY.—Marry, cousin, wheresoever a man falleth in tribulation for the maintenance of justice, or for the defence of God's cause. For if I should hap to find a man that had long lived a very virtuous life, and had at last happed to fall into the Turks' hands, and there did abide by the truth of his faith, and with the suffering of all kind of torments taken upon his body, still did teach and testify the truth, if I should in his passion give him spiritual comfort, might I be bold to tell him no farther, but that he should take patience in his pain, and that God sendeth it him for his sin, and that he is well worthy to have it although it were yet much more? He might then well answer me and such other comforters, as Job‡ answered his, *Consolatores onerosi omnes vos estis*, —Burdenous and heavy comforters be you. Nay, I would not fail to bid him boldly, while I should see him in his passion, cast sin, and hell, and purgatory, and all upon the devil's pate, and doubt not, but like as if he gave over

* 2 Cor. xii.

† Job vi. xxiii. xxxi.

‡ Job xvi.

his hold, all his merit were lost, and he turned to misery; so if he stand and persevere still in the confession of his faith, all his whole pain shall turn all into glory.

Yea, more shall I yet say than this: that if there were a Christian man that had among those infidels committed a very deadly crime, such as were worthy death, not by their laws only, but by Christ's too, as manslaughter or adultery, or such other thing like, if when he were taken he were offered pardon of his life, upon condition that he should forsake the faith of Christ; if this man would now rather suffer death than so do, should I comfort him in his pain but as I would a malefactor? Nay, this man, though he should have died for his sin, dieth now for Christ's sake, while he might live still, if he would forsake him. The bare patient taking of his

death should have served for satisfaction of his sin through the merit of Christ's passion, I mean, without help of which no pain of our own could be satisfactory. But now shall

Without the merit of Christ's passion, no pain of man can be satisfactory.

Christ for his forsaking of his own life in the honour of his faith, forgive the pain of all his sins of his mere liberality, and accept all the pain of his death for merit of reward in heaven, and shall assign no part thereof to the payment of his debt in purgatory, but shall take it all as an offering, and requite it all with glory; and this man among Christian men, all had he been before a devil, nothing after would, I doubt, to take him for a martyr.

VINCENT.—Verily, good uncle, methinketh this is said marvellously well, and it specially delighteth and comforteth me to hear it, because of our principal fear that I first spake of, the 'Turks' cruel incursion into this country of ours.

ANTONY.—Cousin, as for the matter of that fear, I purpose to touch last of all, nor I meant not here to speak thereof, had it not been for that the vehemency of your objection brought it in my way. But rather would I else have put some example for this place, of such as suffer tribulation for maintenance of right and justice, and that rather choose to take harm than do wrong in

any manner of matter. For surely if a man may (as indeed he may) have great comfort in the clearness of his conscience, that hath a false crime put upon him, and by false witness proved upon him, and he falsely punished, and put to worldly shame and pain therefor; Persecution for justice. an hundred times more comfort may he have in his heart, that where white is called black, and right is called wrong, abideth by the truth, and is persecuted for justice.

VINCENT.—Then if a man sue me wrongfully for my own land, in which myself have good right, it is a comfort yet to defend it well, sith God shall give me thank therefor.

ANTONY.—Nay, nay, cousin, nay: there walk you somewhat wide; for there you defend your own right for your temporal avail. And sith St. Paul counselleth,* *Non vosmetipsos defendentes charissimi*,—Defend not yourself, my most dear friend: and our Saviour counselleth,† *Si quis vult tecum iudicio contendere, et tunicam tuam tollere, dimitte ei et pallium*,—If a man will strive with thee at the law, and take away thy coat, leave him thy gown too: the defence, therefore, of our own right asketh no reward. Say, you speed well, if you get leave; look hardly for no thank. But, on the other side, if you do as St. Paul biddeth,‡ *Non quæ sua sunt singuli considerantes, sed ea quæ aliorum*,—Seek not for your own profit, but for other folks'; and defend, therefore, of pity, a poor widow, or a poor fatherless child, and rather suffer sorrow by some strong extortioner, than suffer them take wrong: or, if you be a judge, and will have such zeal to justice that you will rather abide tribulation by the malice of some mighty man, than judge wrong for his favour; such tribulations, lo! be those that are better than only medicinal, and every man upon whom they fall may be bold so to reckon them, and in his deep trouble may well say to himself the words that Christ hath taught him for his comfort,§ *Beati misericordes, quoniam ipsi misericordiam consequentur*,—Blessed be the merciful men, for they shall have mercy given them; *Beati qui persecutio-*

* Rom. xii.

† Matth. v.

‡ Phil. ii.

§ Matth. v.

nem patiuntur propter justitiam, quoniam ipsorum est regnum cælorum,—Blessed be they that suffer persecution for justice, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Here is an high comfort, lo! for them that are in that case. And in this case their own conscience can shew it them, and so may fulfil their hearts with spiritual joy, that the pleasure may far surmount the heaviness and the grief of all their temporal trouble. But God's nearer cause of faith against the Turks hath yet a far passing comfort, that by many degrees far excelleth this, which (as I have said) I purpose to treat last. And for this time this sufficeth, concerning the special comfort that men may take in this third kind of tribulation.

CHAPTER XI.

Another kind of Comfort yet in the base kind of Tribulation sent for our sin.



INCENT.—OF truth, good uncle, albeit that every of these kinds of tribulations have cause of comfort in them as you have well declared, if men will so consider them : yet hath this third kind above all a special prerogative therein.

ANTONY.—That is undoubtedly true; but yet is there not, good cousin, the most base kind of them all, but that it hath more causes of comfort than I have spoken of yet. For I have, you wot well, in that kind that is sent us for our sins, spoken of none other comfort yet but twain: that is to wit, one, that it refraineth us from sin that else we would fall in, and in that serveth us through the merit of Christ's passion as a mean by which God keepeth us from hell; and serveth for the satisfaction of such pain, as else we should endure in purgatory. Howbeit there is therein another great cause of joy besides this. For surely those pains here sent us for our sins, in whatsoever wise they happen unto us, be our sin never so sore, nor never so open and evident unto ourself and all the world too; yet if we pray for grace to take it meekly and patiently, and confessing to God that it is far over too little for our fault, beseech him yet, nevertheless, that sith we shall come hence so void of all good works whereof we should have any reward in heaven, to be not only so merciful to us, as to take that our present tribulation in relief of our pains in purgatory, but also so gracious unto us, as to take our patience therein for a matter of merit

and reward in heaven : I verily trust, and nothing doubt it, but that God shall of his high bounty grant us our boon. For likewise as in hell pain serveth only for punishment without any manner of purging, because all possibility of purging is past; and in purgatory punishment serveth for only purging, because the place of deserving is past; so while we be yet in this world, in which is our place and our time of merit and well deserving, the tribulation that is sent us for our sin here shall (if we faithfully so desire), beside the cleansing and purging of our pain, serve us also for increase of reward. And so shall, I suppose and trust in God's goodness, all such penance and good works, as a man willingly performeth enjoined by his ghostly father in confession, or which he willingly farther doth of his own devotion beside.

For though man's penance, with all the good works that he can do, be not able to satisfy of themselves for the least sin that we do; yet the liberal goodness of God through the merit of Christ's bitter passion, without which all our works could neither satisfy nor deserve, nor yet do not in deed neither merit nor satisfy so much as a spoonful to a great vesselful, in comparison of the merit and satisfaction that Christ hath merited and satisfied for us himself: this liberal goodness of God, I say, shall yet at our faithful instance and request cause our penance and tribulation, patiently taken in this world, to serve us in the other world, both for release and reward, tempered after such rate as his high goodness and wisdom shall see convenient for us, whereof our blind mortality cannot here imagine nor devise the stint. And thus hath yet even the first kind of tribulation and the most base, though not fully so great as the second, and very far less than the third, far greater cause of comfort yet, than I spake of before.

CHAPTER XII.

A certain objection against the things aforesaid.



INCENT.—VERILY, good uncle, this liketh me very well ; but yet is there (ye wot well) some of these things now brought in question. For as for any pain due for our sin to be minished in purgatory by the patient sufferance of our tribulation here ; there are, ye wot well, many that utterly deny that, and affirm for a sure truth, that there is no purgatory at all. And then is (if they say true) the cause of that comfort gone, if the comfort that we should take be in vain and need not. They say, ye wot well also, that men merit nothing at all, but God giveth all for faith alone, and that it were sin and sacrilege to look for reward in heaven, either for our patience and glad suffering for God's sake, or for any other good deed ; and then is there gone (if this be thus) the other cause of our farther comfort too.

ANTONY.—Cousin, if some things were as they be not, then should some things be as they shall not. I cannot indeed say nay, but that some men have of late brought up some such opinions, and many more than these besides, and have spread them abroad. And, albeit that it is a right heavy thing to see such variances in our belief rise and grow among ourself, to the great encouraging of the common enemies of us all, whereby they have our faith in derision, and catch hope to overwhelm us all : yet do these three things not a little comfort my mind.

The first is, That in some communications had of late

together, hath appeared good likelihood of some good agreement to grow together in one accord of our faith.

The second, That in the meanwhile till this may come to pass, contentious dispicions with uncharitable behaviour are prohibited and forbidden in effect upon all parts: all such parts, I mean, as fell before to fight for it.

The third is, That all Germany, for all their divers opinions, yet as they agree together in profession of Christ's name, so agree they now together in preparation of a common power in defence of Christendom against our common enemy the Turk. And I trust to God that this shall not only help us here to strength us in this war, but also that as God hath caused them to agree together in the defence of the contrary mind, shall in reason have no cause to be discontented.

For first, as for purgatory, though they think there be none, yet since they deny not that all the corps of Christendom by so many hundred years have believed the contrary; and among them all the old interpreters of Scripture, from the Apostles' days down to our own time, of whom they deny not many for holy saints; that I dare not believe these men against all those, these men must of their courtesy hold my poor fear excused. And I beseech our Lord heartily for them, that when they depart out of this wretched world, they find no purgatory at all: so God keep them from hell.

Purgatory.

The surest ground and stay in all matters of controversy.

How wisely and how charitably said.

And as for the merit of man in his good works, neither are they that deny it full agreed among themselves, nor any man is there almost of them all that, sith they began to write, hath not somewhat changed and varied from himself; and for the more part are thus far agreed with us, that like as we grant them that no good work is aught worth to heavenward without faith, and that no good work of man is rewardable in heaven of his own nature, but through the mere goodness of God that list to set so high a price upon so poor a thing; and that this price God setteth through Christ's passion, and for that also that they be his own

Merit of man.

works with us (for good works to God-ward worketh no man without God work with him), and as we grant them also that no man may be proud of his works for his own imperfect working, and for that in all that man may do, he can do God no good, but is a servant unprofitable,* and doth but his bare duty; as we, I say, grant unto them these things, so this one thing or twain do they grant us again, that men are bound to work good works if they have time and power; and that whoso worketh in true faith most, shall be most rewarded. But then set they thereto, that all his reward shall be given him for his faith alone, and nothing for his works at all, because his faith is the thing (they say) that forceth him to work well.

Strive will I not with them for this matter now, but yet this I trust to the great goodness of God, that if the question hang on that narrow point, while Christ saith in the Scripture† in so many places, that men shall in heaven be rewarded for their works, he shall never suffer our souls that are but mean-witted men, and can understand his words but as himself hath set them, and as old holy saints have construed them before, and as all Christian people this thousand year have believed, to be damned for lack of perceiving such a sharp subtle thing; specially sith some men that have right good wits, and are beside that right well learned too, can in no wise perceive, for what cause or why these folk that from good works take away the reward, and give the reward all whole to faith alone, give the reward to faith, rather than to charity. For this grant they themselves, that faith serveth of nothing but if she be companied with her sister charity. And then saith the Scripture too: ‡ *Fides, Spes, Charitas: tria hæc, major autem horum est Charitas*,—Of these three virtues, Faith, Hope, and Charity, of all these three the greatest is Charity,—and therefore as worthy to have the thank as Faith. Howbeit, as I said, I will not strive therefor, nor indeed, as our matter standeth, I shall not greatly need. For if they say, that he which suffereth tribulation or martyr-

Charity is
greater than
Faith.

* Luceæ xvii.

† Matth. v.

‡ 1 Cor. xiii.

dom for the faith, shall have high reward, not for his work but for his well-working faith; yet sith that they grant that have it he shall, the cause of high comfort in the third degree standeth, and that is, you wot well, the effect of all my purpose.

VINCENT.—Verily, good uncle, this is truly driven and tried unto the uttermost, as it seemeth me. And therefore, I pray you, proceed at your pleasure.

CHAPTER XIII.

That a man ought to be comfortable to himself, and have good hope, and be joyful also in Tribulation, appeareth well by this, that a man hath great cause of fear and heaviness that continueth alway still in wealth, discontinued with no Tribulation.



Tribulation
full of com-
modity.

ANTONY.—COUSIN, it were a long work to peruse every comfort that a man may well take of tribulation. For as many comforts (you wot well) may a man take thereof as there be good commodities therein; and that be there surely so many, that it would be very long to rehearse and treat of them. But me seemeth we cannot lightly better perceive what profit and commodity, and thereby what comfort they may take of it that have it, than if we well consider what harm the lack is, and thereby what discomfort the lack thereof should be to them that never have it.

So is it now, that all holy men agree, and all the Scripture is full, and our own experience proveth at our eye, that we be not come into this wretched world to dwell here, nor have not (as St. Paul saith)* our dwelling city here, but we be seeking for the city that is to come; and therefore St. Paul sheweth us that we do seek for it, as they that are good folk, and fain would come thither, do. For surely whoso setteth so little thereby that he listeth not to seek therefor, it will, I fear me, be long ere he come thereat, and marvellous great grace if he ever come thither. *Sic currite*, saith St. Paul,† *ut comprehen-*

* Heb. xiii.

† 1 Cor. ix.

datis,—Run so, that you may get it. If it must then be gotten with running, when shall he come at it that list not once step toward it? Now because that this world is, as I tell you, not our eternal dwelling, but our little while wandering, God would that we should in such wise use it, as folk that were weary of it; and that we should in this vale of labour, toil, tears, and misery, not look for rest and ease, game, pleasure, wealth, and felicity. For they that so do fare like a foul fellow, that going towards his own house where he should be wealthy, would for a tapster's pleasure become an hostler by the way and die in a stable, and never come at home. And would God that those that drown themselves in the desire of this world's wretched wealth, were not yet more fools than so!

A merry and a true comparison.

But, alas! their folly as far passeth the foolishness of that other fond fellow, as there is distance between the height of heaven and the very depth of hell. For our Saviour saith, *Væ vobis qui ridetis nunc, quia lugebitis et flebitis*,—Wo may you be that laugh now, for you shall wail and weep.* *Est tempus flendi* (saith the Scripture) *et est tempus ridendi*,—There is time of weeping and there is time of laughing.† But, as you see, he setteth the weeping time before; for that is the time of this wretched world, and the laughing time shall come after in heaven. There is also a time of sowing, and a time of reaping too. Now must we in this world sow, that we may in the other world reap; and in this short sowing time of this weeping world, must we water our seed with the showers of our tears; and then shall we have in heaven a merry laughing harvest for ever. *Euntes ibant et flebant* (saith the prophet) *mittentes semina sua*,—They went forth and sowed their seeds weeping.‡ But what, saith he, shall follow thereof? *Venientes autem venient cum exultatione, portantes manipulos suos*,—They shall come again more than laughing, with great joy and exultation, with their handfuls of corn in their hands. Lo, they that in their going home towards heaven sow their seed with weeping,

* Luc. vi.

† Eccl. iii.

‡ Psalm cxxv.

shall at the day of judgment come to their bodies again, with everlasting plenty, laughing.

And for to prove that this life is no laughing time, but rather the time of weeping; we find that our Saviour himself wept twice or thrice, but never find we that he laughed so much as once. I will not swear that he never did, but at the least wise he left us no ensample of it. But, on the other side, he left us ensample of weeping.* Of weeping have we matter enough, both for our own sins, and for other folks' too; for surely so should we do, bewail their wretched sins, and not be glad to detract

Continual
wealth more to
be pitied than
enbied.

them, nor envy them neither. Alas! silly souls, what cause is there to envy them that are ever wealthy in this world, and ever out of tribulation? which (as Job saith) *ducunt in bonis dies suos, et in puncto ad inferna descendunt*,—lead all their days in wealth, and in a moment of an hour descend into their graves, and be painfully buried in hell.† St. Paul saith unto the Hebrews, that God those that he loveth, he chastiseth. *Et flagellat omnem filium quem recipit*,—And he scourgeth every son of his that he receiveth.‡ St. Paul saith also, *Per multas tribulationes oportet nos introire in regnum Dei*,—By many tribulations must we go into the kingdom of God.§ And no marvel, for our Saviour Christ said so himself unto his two disciples that were going unto the castle of Emmaus, *An nesciebatis, quia oportebat Christum pati, et sic introire in regnum suum?*—Knew you not, that Christ must suffer, and so go into his kingdom?|| And would we, that are servants, look for more privilege in our Master's house than our Master himself? Would we get into his kingdom with ease, when he himself got not into his own but by pain? His kingdom hath he ordained for his disciples, and he saith unto us all, *Qui vult esse meus discipulus, tollat crucem suam, et sequatur me*,—If any man will be my disciple, let him learn of me to do as I have

* [Our Saviour wept upon the city of Jerusalem, Luc. xix. Upon Lazarus, John ii. And in his passion, Heb. v.]

† Job xxi.

‡ Hebræ. xii.

§ Act. xiv.

|| Lucæ xxiv.

done,* take his cross of tribulation upon his back and follow me. He saith not here, lo ! let him laugh, and make merry.

Now, if heaven serve but for Christ's disciples, and they be those that take their cross of tribulation ; when shall these folk come there, that never have tribulation ? And if it be true that St. Paul saith, that God chastiseth all them that he loveth, and scourgeth every child whom he receiveth,† and to heaven shall none come but such as he loveth and receiveth, when shall they then come thither whom he never chastiseth, nor never doth vouchsafe to file his hands upon them, nor give them so much as one lash ? And if we cannot (as St. Paul saith we cannot) come to heaven but by many tribulations,‡ how shall they come thither then, that never have none at all ? Thus see we well by the very Scripture itself, how true the words are of old holy saints, that with one voice in a manner say all one thing, that is to wit, that we shall not have both continual wealth in this world and in the other too. And therefore, sith they that in this world without any tribulation enjoy their long continual course of never interrupted prosperity, have a great cause of fear and discomfort lest they be far fallen out of God's favour, and stand deep in his indignation and displeasure, while he never sendeth them tribulation, which he is ever wont to send them whom he loveth ; they therefore, I say, that are in tribulation, have on the other side a great cause to take in their grief great inward comfort and spiritual consolation.

* Matth. xvi. [Luke.]

† Heb. xii.

‡ Act. xiv.

CHAPTER XIV.

A certain objection, and the answer thereto.



INCENT.—VERILY, good uncle, this seemeth so, indeed. Howbeit, yet, methink you say very sore in some things concerning such persons as are in continual prosperity; and they be, you wot well, not a few, and those are they also that have the rule and authority of this world in their hand. And I wot well, that when they talk with such great cunning men, as can (I trow) tell the truth; and when they ask them whether (while they make merry here in earth all their life) they may not yet for all that have heaven after too; they do tell them, yes, yes, well enough: for I have heard them tell them so myself.

ANTONY.—I suppose, good cousin, that no very wise man, and specially none that very good is therewith, will tell any man fully of that fashion. But surely such as so say to them, I fear me that they flatter them, either for lucre or fear. Some of them *Flattery.* think peradventure thus:—This man maketh much of me now, and giveth me money also to fast, and watch, and pray for him; but so I fear me would he do no more, if I should go tell him now, that all that I do for him will not serve him, but if he go fast, and watch, and pray for himself too. For if I should see thereto and say farther, that my diligent intercession for him should (I trust) be the mean that God should the sooner give him grace to amend, and fast, and watch, and pray, and take affliction in his own body for the bettering of his sinful soul, he would be wondrous wroth with that. For he would be

loth to have any such grace at all as should make him go leave off any of his mirth, and so sit and mourn for his sin. Such mind as this, lo! have there some of those that are not unlearned, and have ^{Yea, and a great some.} worldly wit at will, which tell great men such tales as perilously beguile them, rather than the flatterer that so telleth them would with a true tale jeopard to leese his lucre.

Some are there also that such tales tell them for consideration of another fear. For seeing the man so sore set on his pleasure that they despair any amendment of him whatsoever they should shew him, and then seeing also beside that the man doth no great harm, but of a gentle nature doth some good men some good; they pray God himself to send him grace, and so they let him lie lame still in his fleshly lusts *ad probaticam piscinam, expectantes aquæ motum*,* at the pool that the Gospel speaketh of beside the Temple, wherein they washed the sheep for the sacrifice, and they tarry to see the water stirred. And when his good angel coming from God shall once begin to stir the water of his heart, and move him to the lowly meekness of a simple sheep, then if he call them to him they will tell him another tale, and help to bear him and plunge him into the pool of penance over the hard ears. But in the meanwhile, for fear lest when he would wax never the better he would wax much the worse, and from gentle, forsooth, sweet, and courteous, wax angry, rough, froward, and sour, and thereupon be troublous and tedious to the world; to make fair weather withal, they give him fair words for the while, and put him in good comfort, and let him for the remanent stand at his own adventure. And in such wise deal they with him as the mother doth sometime with her child, which, when the little boy will not rise in time for her, but lie still a-bed and slug, and when he is up weepeth because he hath lain so long, fearing to be beaten at school for his late coming thither; she telleth him then that it is but early days, and he shall come time enough, and biddeth him go, good son, I warrant thee, I have sent to thy master

* Joan. v.

myself, take thy bread and butter with thee, thou shalt not be beaten at all. And thus (so she may send him merry forth at the door, that he weep not in her sight at home) she studieth not much upon the matter, though he be taken tardy, and beaten when he cometh to school. Surely thus, I fear me, fare there many friars and States' chaplains too, in comfort giving to great men when they be loth to displease them. I cannot commend their thus doing, but surely I fear me thus they do.

CHAPTER XV.

Other objections.

INCENT.—BUT yet, good uncle, though some do thus, this answereth not full the matter. For we see that the whole Church in the Common Service useth divers collects, in which all men pray specially for the princes and the prelates, and generally every man for other, and for himself too, that God would vouchsafe to send them all perpetual health and prosperity. And I can see no good man pray God send another sorrow, nor no such prayers are put in the priest's portasse, as far as I can hear.

And yet if it were as you say, good uncle, that perpetual prosperity were to the soul so perilous, and tribulation thereto so fruitful; then were (as me seemeth) every man bounden of charity, not only to pray God send their neighbour sorrow, but also to help thereto themselves. And when folk are sick, not pray God send them health, but when they come to comfort them they should say, I am glad, good gossip, that you be so sick, I pray God keep you long therein. And neither should any man give any medicine to another, nor take any medicine himself neither; for by the minishing of the tribulation, he taketh away part of the profit from his soul, which can with no bodily profit be sufficiently recompensed.

And also this wot you well, good uncle, that we read in holy Scripture of men that were wealthy and rich, and yet were good withal.* Solomon was, you wot well, the

* 2 Reg. x.

richest and the most wealthy king that any man could in his time tell of, and yet was he well-beloved with God. Job was also no beggar *perdie*, nor no wretch otherwise, nor lost his riches and his wealth, for that God would not that his friend should have wealth, but for the show of his patience, to the increase of his merit, and confusion of the devil. And for proof that prosperity may stand with God's favour, *Reddidit Deus Job omnia duplicia*;—God restored him double of all that ever he lost, and gave him after long life to take his pleasure long.*

Abraham was eke, you wot well, a man of great substance, and so continued all his life in honour and in wealth;† yea, and when he died, too, he went into such wealth that Lazarus, which died in tribulation and poverty, the best place that he came to, was that rich man's bosom.‡ Finally, good uncle, this we find at our age, and every day we prove it by plain experience, that many a man is right wealthy, and yet therewith right good, and many a miserable wretch as evil as he is wretched. And therefore it seemeth hard, good uncle, that between prosperity and tribulation the matter should go thus, that tribulation should be given alway by God to those that he loveth for a sign of salvation, and prosperity sent for displeasure as a token of eternal damnation.

* Job xlii.

† Gen. xiii.

‡ Luc. xvi.

CHAPTER XVI.

The answer to the objections.



ANTONY.—EITHER I said not, cousin, or else meant I not to say, that for an undoubted rule worldly prosperity were alway displeasing to God, or tribulation evermore wholesome to every man. For well wot I, that our Lord giveth in this world unto either sort of folk, either sort of fortune. *Et facit solem suum oriri super bonos et malos, et pluit super justos et injustos*;—He maketh his sun to shine both upon the good and the bad, and his rain to rain both on the just and the unjust.* And on the other side, *Flagellat omnem filium quem recipit*;—He scourgeth every son that he receiveth.† And yet he beateth not only good folk that he loveth, but *Multa flagella peccatoris* too,—There are many scourges for sinners also.‡ He giveth evil folk good fortune in this world, both to call them by kindness, and if they thereby come not, the more is their unkindness; and yet where wealth will not bring them, he giveth them sometime sorrow. And some that in prosperity cannot to God creep forward, in tribulation toward him they run apace. *Multiplicatæ sunt infirmitates eorum, postea acceleraverunt*;—Their infirmities were multiplied (saith the prophet) and after that they made haste.§

To some that are good men God sendeth wealth here also, and they give him great thank for his gift, and he rewardeth them for the thank too. To some good folk

* Matth. v.

† Hebræ. xii.

‡ Psal. xxxii.

§ Psal. xv.

he sendeth sorrow, and they thank him thereof too. If God should give the goods of this world only to evil folk, then would men ween that God were not the Lord thereof. If God would give the goods only to good men, then would folk take occasion to serve him but for them. Some will in wealth fall into folly. *Homo cum in honore esset, non intellexit: comparatus est jumentis insipientibus, et similis factus est illis*;—When man was in honour his understanding failed him; then was he compared with beasts, and made like unto them.* Some man with tribulation will fall into sin, and therefore, saith the prophet: *Non relinquet Dominus virgam peccatorum super sortem justorum, ut non extendant justi ad iniquitatem manus suas*;—God will not leave the rod of wicked men upon the lot of righteous men, lest the righteous peradventure hap to extend and stretch out their hands to iniquity.† So say I not nay, but that in either state, wealth or tribulation may be matter of virtue and matter of vice also: but this is the point, lo! that standeth here in question between you and me; not whether every prosperity be a perilous token, but whether continual wealth in this world without any tribulation be a fearful sign of God's indignation. And therefore this mark that we must shoot at, set up well in our sight, we shall now mete for the shot, and consider how near toward, or how far off, your arrows are from the prick.

VINCENT.—Some of my bolts, uncle, will I now take up myself, and prettily put them under my belt again. For some of them, I see well, be not worth the meting; and no great marvel, though I shoot wide, while I somewhat mistake the mark.

ANTONY.—Those that make toward the mark and light far too short, when the shot is mete shall I take up for you.

1. To prove that perpetual wealth should be no evil token, you lay first, that for princes and prelates, and every man for other, we pray all for perpetual prosperity, and that in the common prayers of the Church too.

* Psal. xlviii.

† Psal. cxxiv.

2. Then say you, secondly, that if prosperity were so perilous, and tribulation so profitable, every man ought then to pray God to send other sorrow.

3. Thirdly, you furnish your objections with ensamples of Solomon, Job, and Abraham.

4. And, fourthly, in the end of all, you prove by experience of our own time daily before our face, that some wealthy folk are good, and some needy very naught. That last bolt I think, lo ! that sith I say the same myself, you be content to take up, it lieth so far wide.

VINCENT.—That will I with a good will, uncle.

ANTONY.—Well, do so then, good cousin, and we shall mete for the remnant. First must you, cousin, be sure that you look well to the mark, and that can you not do, but if you know what thing tribulation is. For sith that it is one of the chief things that we principally speak of, but if you consider well what that is, you may miss the mark again. I suppose now, that you will ^{that tribu-} agree, that tribulation is every such thing as ^{lation is.} troubleth and grieveth a man, either in body or mind, and is, as it were, the prick of a thorn, a bramble, or a brier thrust into his flesh, or into his mind. And surely, cousin, the prick that very sore pricketh the mind, as far almost passeth in pain the grief that paineth the body, as doth a thorn that is sticking in the heart pass and exceed in pain the thorn that is thrust in the heel. Now, cousin, if tribulation be this that I call it, then shall you soon consider this, that there be more kinds of tribulation than you peradventure thought on before. And thereupon it followeth also, that sith every kind of tribulation is an interruption of wealth, and prosperity (which is but of wealth another name) may be discontinued by more ways than you would afore have weened ; then say I thus unto you, cousin, that sith tribulation is not only such pangs as pain the body, but every trouble also that grieveth the mind, many good men have many tribulations that every man marketh not, and consequently their wealth interrupted therewith, when other men are not ware. For trow you, cousin, that the temptations of the devil, the world and the flesh, soliciting the mind of a

good man unto sin, is not a great inward trouble and secret grief to his heart?

To such wretches as care not for their conscience, but like unreasonable beasts, follow their foul affections, many of these temptations be no trouble at all, but matter of their bodily pleasure. But unto him, cousin, that standeth in dread of God, the tribulation of temptation is so painful, that to be rid thereof, or sure of the victory therein (be his substance never so great) he would gladly give more than half. Now, if he that careth not for God think this trouble but a trifle, and with such tribulation, prosperity not interrupted; let him cast in his mind, if himself hap upon a fervent longing for the thing which get he cannot (and as a good man will not), as per case his pleasure of some certain good woman that will not be naught, and then let him tell me whether the ruffle of his desire shall so torment his mind, as all the pleasures that he can take beside shall, for lack of that one, not please him of a pin. And I dare be bold to warrant him that the pain in resisting, and the great fear of falling, that many a good man hath in his temptation, is an anguish and a grief every deal as great as his.

Now say I farther, cousin, that if this be true, as in very deed true it is, that such trouble is tribulation, and thereby consequently an interruption of prosperous wealth; no man precisely meaneth to pray for other to keep him in continual prosperity without any manner of discontinuance or change in this world. For that prayer, without other condition added or implied, were inordinate, and were very childish. For it were to pray, that either they should never have temptation; or else, that if they had, they might follow it and fulfil their affection. Who dare, good cousin, for shame, or for sin, for himself, or for any man else, make this manner kind of prayer? Besides this, cousin, the Church, you wot well, adviseth every man to fast, and watch, and pray, both for taming of his fleshly lusts, and also to mourn and lament for his sin before committed, and to bewail his offences done against God, and (as they did at the city of Nineveh,* and

* Jonæ iii.

as the prophet David did,* for their sin) put affliction to their flesh. And when a man so doth, cousin, is this no tribulation to him because he doth it himself? For I wot well you would agree that it were, if another man did it against his will. Then is tribulation, you wot well, tribulation still, though it be taken well in worth; yea, and though it be taken to with very right good will, yet is pain, you wot well, pain, and therefore so is it though a man do it himself. Then, sith the Church adviseth every man to take tribulation for his sin; whatsoever words you find in any prayer, they never mean (you may be fast and sure) to pray God to keep every good man, nor every bad man neither, from every manner kind of tribulation.

Now he that is not in some kind of tribulation, as peradventure in sickness or in loss of goods, is not yet out of tribulation, if he have his ease of body or of mind unquieted, and thereby his wealth interrupted with another kind of tribulation, as is either temptation to a good man, or voluntary affliction, either of body by penance, or of mind by contrition and heaviness for his sin and offence against God. And thus, I say, that for precise perpetual wealth and prosperity in this world, that is to say, for the perpetual lack of all trouble and all tribulation, there is no wise man that either prayeth for himself or for any man else. And thus answer I your first objection.

Now, before I meddle with your second, your third will I join to this. For upon this answer will the solution of your ensamples conveniently depend. As for Solomon was,† as you say, all his days a marvellous wealthy king, and much was he beloved with God, I wot well, in the beginning of his reign; but that the favour of God persevered with him, as his prosperity did, that cannot I tell. And therefore will I not warrant it; but surely we see that his continual wealth made him fall, first into such wanton folly in multiplying wives to an horrible number,‡ contrary to the commandment of God given in the law of Moses; and secondly, taking to wife among other such

* 2 Reg. xii. et xxiv.

† 2 Reg. x.

‡ Reg. xi.

as were infidels, contrary to another commandment of God's written law also; that finally, by the mean of his miscreant wife, he fell into maintenance of idolatry himself; and of this find we no amendment or repentance, as we find of his father. And therefore, though he were buried where his father was, yet whether he went to the rest that his father did, through some secret sorrow for his sin at last, that is to say, by some kind of tribulation, I cannot tell, and am content therefore to trust well, and pray God he did so, but surely we be not sure. And therefore the ensample of Solomon can very little serve you; for you might as well lay it for a proof that God favoureth idolatry, as that he favoureth prosperity; for Solomon was, you wot well, in both.

As for Job, sith our question hangeth upon prosperity perpetual,* the wealth of Job that was with so great adversity so sore interrupted, can (as yourself seeth) serve you for no ensample. And that God gave him here in this world all thing double that he lost, little toucheth my matter, which deny not prosperity to be God's gift, and given to some good men too, namely, such as have tribulation too. But in Abraham, cousin, I suppose is all your chief hold, because that you not only shew riches and prosperity perpetual in him through the course of all his whole life in this world, but that after his death also, Lazar,† the poor man that lived in tribulation, and died from pure hunger and thirst, had after his death his place of comfort and rest in Abraham, the wealthy, rich man's bosom. But here must you consider, that Abraham had not such continual prosperity, but that it was discontinued with divers tribulations.

1. Was it nothing to him, trow you, to leave his own country, and at God's sending,‡ to go into a strange land, which God promised him and his seed for ever, but in all his whole life he gave himself never a foot?

2. Was it no trouble that his cousin Loth and himself were fain to part company,§ because their servants could not agree together?

3. Though he recovered Loth again from the three

* Job xlii.

† [Luc. xvi.]

‡ Gen. xii.

§ Gen. xiii.

kings,* was his taking no trouble to him, trow you, in the meanwhile?

4. Was the destruction of the five cities† no heaviness to his heart? A man would ween yes, that readeth in the story what labour he made to save them.

5. His heart was, I dare say, in no little sorrow, when he was fain to let Abimelech, the king, have his wife,‡ whom (though God provided to keep undefiled and turned all to wealth), yet was it no little woe to him in the meantime.

6. What continual grief was it to his heart many a long day, that he had no child of his own body begotten:§ he that doubteth thereof shall find it in Genesis of his own moan made to God.

7. No man doubteth but Ismael was great comfort unto him at his birth: || and was it no grief then, when he must cast out the mother and the child both?

8. Isaac, that was the child of promission, although God kept his life that was unlooked for; yet, while the loving father bound him, and went about to behead him, and offer him up in sacrifice: ¶ who but himself can conceive what heaviness his heart had then? I would ween in my mind (because you speak of Lazar) that Lazar's own death panged him not so sore. Then, as Lazarus's pain was patiently borne, so was Abraham's taken not only patiently, but (which is a thing much more meritorious) of obedience, willingly. And therefore, though Abraham had not (as he did, indeed) far excelled Lazar in merit of reward for many other things beside, and specially for that he was a special patriarch of the faith, yet had he far passed him even by the merit of tribulation, well taken here for God's sake too. And so serveth for your purpose no man less than Abraham.

But now, good cousin, let us look a little longer here upon the rich Abraham and Lazar the poor, and as we shall see Lazar set in wealth somewhat under the rich Abraham, so shall we see another rich man lie full low beneath Lazar, crying and calling out of his fiery couch

* Gen. xiv.

§ Gen. xv.

† Gen. xv.

|| Gen. xvi. and xxi.

‡ Gen. xx.

¶ Gen. xxii.

that Lazar might with a drop of water falling from his finger's end, a little cool and refresh the tip of his burning tongue. Consider well now what Abraham answered to the rich wretch:* *Fili, recordare quia recepisti bona in vita tua, et Lazarus similiter mala: nunc autem hic consolatur, tu vero cruciaris*;—Son, remember that thou hast in thy life received wealth, and Lazar in likewise pain; but now receiveth he comfort, and thou sorrow, pain, and torment. Christ describeth his wealth and his prosperity, gay and soft apparel, with royal delicate fare, continually day by day. *Epulabatur* (saith our Saviour) *quotidie splendide*;—He did fare royally every day.† His wealth was continual, lo! no time of tribulation between. And Abraham telleth him the same tale, that he had taken his wealth in this world, and Lazarus likewise his pain: and that they had now changed each to the clean contrary: poor Lazar from tribulation into wealth, and the rich man from his continual prosperity into perpetual pain. Here was laid expressly to Lazar no very great virtue by name, nor to this rich glutton no great heinous crime, but the taking of his continual ease and pleasure without any tribulation or grief, whereof grew sloth and negligence to think upon the poor man's pain. For that ever himself saw Lazarus, and wist him die for hunger at his door, that laid neither Christ nor Abraham to his charge. And therefore, cousin, this story, lo! of which by occasion of Abraham and Lazar you put me in remembrance, well declareth what peril is in continual worldly wealth, and contrariwise what comfort cometh of tribulation. And thus as your other ensamples of Solomon and Job nothing for the matter further you; so your ensample of rich Abraham and poor Lazarus hath not a little hindered you.

* Luc. xvi.

† Ibidem.

CHAPTER XVII.

An answer to the second objection.



INCENT.—SURELY, uncle, you have shaken mine ensamples sore, and have in your meting of your shot moved me these arrows, methinketh, farther off from the prick than methought they stack when I shot them. And I shall therefore now be content to take them up again. But yet me seemeth surely, that my second shot may stand. For of truth, if every kind of tribulation be so profitable, that it be good to have it, as you say it is: I cannot see wherefore any man should either wish or pray, or any manner of thing do, to have any kind of tribulation withdrawn, either from himself or any friend of his.

ANTONY.—I think in very deed tribulation so good and profitable, that I should haply doubt as you do wherefore a man might labour or pray to be delivered of it, saving that God which teacheth us the one, teacheth us also the other. And as he biddeth us take our pain patiently, and exhort our neighbours to do also the same: so biddeth he us also not let to do our devoir, to remove the pain from us both. And then when it is God that teacheth both, I shall not need to break my brain in devising wherefore he would bid us do both, the one seeming to resist the other. If he send the scourge of scarcity and of great famine, he will we shall bear it patiently; but yet will he that we shall eat our meat when we can hap to get it. If he send us the plague of pestilence, he will that we shall patiently take it; but

yet will he that we let us blood, and lay plasters to draw it, and ripe it, and lance it, and get it away. Both these points teacheth God in Scripture in more than many places. Fasting is better than eating, and more thank hath of God; and yet will God that we shall eat. Praying is better than drinking, and much more pleasant to God; and yet will God that we shall drink. Waking in good business is much more acceptable to God than sleeping; and yet will God that we shall sleep.

The reason
why bodily
afflictions and
tribulations
are to be tem-
pered.

God hath given us our bodies here to keep, and will that we maintain them to do him service with, till he send for us hence. Now can we not tell surely how much tribulation may mar it, or peradventure hurt the soul also? Wherefore the apostle, after that he had commanded the Corinthians to deliver to the devil the abominable fornicator that forbare not the bed of his own father's wife:* yet after that he had been awhile accursed and punished for his sin, the apostle commanded them charitably to receive him again and give him consolation. *Ne forte abundantiori tristitia absorbeatur*;—Lest peradventure the greatness of his sorrow should swallow him up.† And therefore when God sendeth the tempest, he will that the shipmen shall get them to their tackling, and do the best they can for themselves, that the seas eat them not up. For help ourselves as well as we can, he can make his plague as sore, and as long lasting, as himself list. And as he will that we do for ourself, so will he that we do for our neighbours too: and that we shall be in this world each to other piteous, and not *sine affectione*, for which the apostle rebuketh them that lack their tender affections here: so that of charity sorry should we be for their pain too, upon whom (for cause necessary) we be driven ourself to put it. And whoso saith, that for pity of his neighbour's soul he will have none of his body, let him be sure that (as St. John saith) he that loveth not his neighbour whom he seeth, loveth God but a little whom he seeth not.‡ So that he that hath no pity of the pain that he seeth his neighbour feel afore him,

* 1 Cor. v.

† [2 Cor. ii.]

‡ 1 Joan. iv.

pitieth little (whatsoever he say) the pain of his soul that he seeth not.

God sendeth us also such tribulation sometime, because his pleasure is to have us pray unto him for help. And therefore, when St. Peter was in prison, the Scripture sheweth that the whole Church without intermission prayed incessantly for him; and that at their fervent prayer God by miracle delivered him.* When the disciples in the tempest stood in fear of drowning, they prayed unto Christ and said, *Salva nos, Domine, perimus*;—Save us, Lord, we perish.† And then at their prayer he shortly ceased the tempest. And now see we proved often, that in sore weather or sickness, by general processions God giveth gracious help. And many a man in his great pain and sickness by calling upon God is marvellously made whole. This is God's goodness, that because ^{God's goodness.} in wealth we remember him not, but forget to pray to him, sendeth us sorrow and sickness to force us to draw toward him, and compelleth us to call upon him and pray for release of our pain. Whereby when we learn to know him, and seek to him, we take a good occasion to fall after into farther grace.

* Act. xii.

† Matth. viii.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Of them that in Tribulation seek not unto God, but some to the flesh, and some to the world, and some to the devil himself.



INCENT.—VERILY, good uncle, with this good answer I am well content.

ANTONY.—Yea, cousin, but many men are there with whom God is not content, which abuse this great goodness of his, whom neither fair treating, nor hard hand-

Oh, how true
is this!

ling, can cause to remember their Maker; but in wealth they be wanton and forget God, and follow their lust, and when God with tribulation draweth them toward him, then wax they wode, and draw back all that ever they may, and rather run and seek help at any other hand, than to go fet it at his. Some for comfort seek to the flesh, some to the world, and some to the devil himself. Some man that in worldly prosperity is very dull, and hath deep stepped into many a sore sin, which sins, when he did them, he counted for

A notable
description of
God's calling,
and how it
worketh di-
versly with
divers men.

part of his pleasure: God willing of his goodness to call the man to grace, casteth a remorse into his mind among after his first sleep, and maketh him lie a little awhile and bethink him. Then beginneth he to remember his life, and from that he falleth to think upon his death, and how he must leave all this worldly wealth within a while behind here in this world, and walk hence alone, he wotteth not whither, nor how soon he shall take his journey thither, nor can tell what company he shall meet

there. And then beginneth he to think that it were good to make sure, and to be merry, so that he be wise therewith, lest there hap to be such black bugs indeed as folks call devils, whose torments he was wont to take for poets' tales. Those thoughts, if they sink deep, are a sore tribulation. And surely if he take hold of the grace that God therein offereth him, his tribulation is whole-
Tribulation
wholesome.
 some and shall be full comfortable, to remember that God by this tribulation calleth him, and biddeth him come home out of the country of sin that he was bred and brought up so long in, and come into the land of behest that floweth with milk and honey. And then if he follow this calling (as many one full well doth) joyful shall his sorrow be, and glad shall he be to change his life, leave his wanton lusts, and do penance for his sins, bestowing his time upon better business.

But some men now, when this calling of God causeth them to be sad, they be loth to leave
Another sort of
men more com-
mon than the
first.
 their sinful lusts that hang in their hearts, and specially if they have any such kind of living as they must needs leave off, or fall deeper in sin: or if they have done so many great wrongs that they have many mends to make, that must (if they follow God) minish much of their money, then are these folk (alas!) wofully bewrapped. For God pricketh upon them of his great goodness still, and the grief of this great pang pincheth them at the heart, and of wickedness they wry away, and for this tribulation they turn to their flesh for help, and labour to shake off this thought, and then they mend their pillow, and lay their head softer, and
Mark this
well.
 essay to sleep; and when that will not be, then they find a talk awhile with them that lie by them. If that cannot be neither, then they lie and long for day, and then get them forth about their worldly wretchedness the matter of their prosperity, the selfsame sinful things with which they displease God most, and at length with many times using this manner God utterly casteth them off. And then they set nought neither by God nor devil.
*Peccator cum in profundum venerit, contemnit;—*When the

sinner cometh even into the depth,* then he contemneth and setteth nought by nothing, saving worldly fear that may fall by chance, or that needs must (they wot well) fall once by death. But alas! when death cometh, then cometh again his sorrow; then will no soft bed serve, nor no company make him merry. Then he must leave his outward worship and comfort of his glory, and lie panting in his bed as it were on a pin-bank; then cometh his fear of his evil life and of his dreadful death. Then cometh the torment of his cumbered conscience, and fear of his heavy judgment. Then the devil draweth him to despair with imagination of hell, and suffereth him not then to take it for a fable. And yet if he do; then findeth it the wretch no fable. Ah! wo worth the while that folk think not of this in time.

God sendeth to some man great trouble in his mind, and great tribulation about his worldly goods, because he would of his goodness take his delight and his confidence from them. And yet the man withdraweth no part of his fond phantasies, but falleth more fervently to them than before, and setteth his whole heart like a fool more upon them: and then he taketh him all to the devices of his worldly councillors, and without any counsel of God, The wise men of this world. or any trust put in him, maketh many wise ways as he weeneth, and all turn at length into folly, and one subtle drift driveth another to naught.

[And do they not so?] Some have I seen even in their last sickness sit up in their death-bed underpropped with pillows, take their playfellows to them, and comfort themselves with cards, and this (they said) did ease them well to put phantasies out of their heads: and what phantasies trow you? Such as I told you right now, of their own lewd life and peril of their soul, of heaven and of hell that irked them to think of, and therefore cast it out with card play as long as ever they might, till the pure pangs of death pulled their heart from their play, and put them in a case they could not reckon their game. And then left they their gamners,

* Prover. xviii.

and slyly slunk away; and long was it not ere they gasped up the ghost. And what game they then came to, that God knoweth, and not I. I pray God it were good, but I fear it very sore.

Some men are there also, that do (as did king Saul) in tribulation go seek unto the devil.* This king had commanded all such to be destroyed, as used the false abominable superstition of this ungracious witchcraft and necromancy, and yet fell he to such folly afterward himself, that ere he went to battle he sought unto a witch, and besought her to raise up a dead man to tell him how he should speed.† Now had God shewed him before by Samuel, that he should come to nought, and he went about none amendment, but waxed worse and worse, so that God list not to look to him. And when he sought by the prophets to have answer of God, there came none answer to him, which thing he thought strange. And because he was not with God heard at his pleasure, he made suit to the devil, desiring a woman by witchcraft to raise up dead Samuel; but speed had he such thereof, as commonly they have all, that in their business meddle with such matters. For an evil answer had he, and an evil speed thereafter, his army discomfited and himself slain. And as it is rehearsed in Paralipomenon,‡ one cause of his fall was, for lack of trust in God, for which he left to take counsel of God, and fell to seek counsel of the witch§ against God's prohibition in the law, and against his own good deed, by which he punished and put out all witches so late afore.

Against con-
jurers and
witches.

Such speed let them look for, that play the same part, as I see many do, that in a great loss send to such a conjurer to get their gear again: and marvellous things there they see sometime, but never groat of their good again. And many a fond fool there is, that when he lieth sick, will meddle with no physic in no manner wise, nor send his water to no cunning

[Conjuration.]

* 1 Reg. xxvii.

† Lib. i. cap. 10.

† 1 Reg. xv.

§ [1 Reg. xxviii. Levi. xix. xx.]

[*Witches.*] man, but send his cap or his hose to a wise woman, otherwise called a witch. Then sendeth she word again, that she hath spied in his hose where, when he took no heed, he was taken with a sprite between two doors as he went in the twilight, but the sprite would not let him feel it in five days after; and it hath all the while festered in his body, and that is the grief that paineth him so sore. But let him go to no leechcraft, nor any manner of physic, other than good meat and strong drink, for syrups should souse him up. But

[*A charm.*] he shall have five leaves of valerian that she enchanted with a charm, and gathered with her left hand: let him lay those five leaves to his right thumb, not bind it fast to, but let it hang loose thereat by a green thread: he shall never need to change it, look it fall not away, but let it hang till he be whole, and he shall need no more.

In such wise witches, and in such mad medicines have many fools more faith a great deal, than in God. And thus, cousin, as I tell you, all these kind of folk that in their tribulation call not upon God, but seek for their help and for their ease elsewhere, to the flesh and the world, and some to the flinging fiend himself; the tribulation that God's goodness sendeth them for good, themselves by their folly turn unto their harm. And they that on the other side seek unto God therein, both comfort and profit they greatly take thereby.

CHAPTER XIX.

Another Objection, with the Answers thereunto.



INCENT.—I LIKE well, good uncle, all your answers herein; but one doubt yet remaineth there in mind, which riseth upon this answer that you make, and that doubt soiled, I will as for this time, mine own good uncle, encumber you no farther. For methink I do you very much wrong, to give you occasion to labour yourself so much in matter of some study, with long talking at once. I will therefore at this time move you but one thing, and seek other time at your more ease for the remnant. My doubt, good uncle, is this. I perceive well by your answers gathered and considered together, that you will [Four notable things.] well agree, that a man may both have worldly wealth, and yet well go to God. And that on the other side, a man may be miserable and live in tribulation, and yet go to the devil. And as a man may please God by patience in adversity, so may he please God by thanksgiving in prosperity.

Now sith you grant these things to be such, that either of them both may be matter of virtue, or else matter of sin, matter of damnation, or matter of salvation; they seem neither good nor bad of their own nature, but things of themselves equal and indifferent, turning to good or the contrary, after as they be taken. And then if this be thus, I can perceive no cause why you should give the pre-eminence unto tribulation, or wherefore you should

reckon more cause of comfort therein than you should reckon to stand in prosperity, but rather a great deal less, by in manner half, sith in prosperity the man is well at ease, and may also by giving thank to God get good unto his soul, whereas in tribulation, though he may merit by patience, as in abundance of worldly wealth the other may by thank; yet lacketh he much comfort that the wealthy man hath, in that he sore is grieved with heaviness and pain: besides this also, that a wealthy man well at ease may pray to God quietly and merrily, with alacrity and great quietness of mind, whereas he that lieth groaning in his grief cannot endure to pray nor think almost upon nothing, but upon his pain.

ANTONY.—To begin, cousin, where you leave; the prayers of him that is in wealth, and him that is in woe, if the men be both nought, their prayers be both like. For neither hath the one list to pray, nor the other neither. And as the one is let with his pain, so is the other with his pleasure, saving that the pain stirreth him some time to call upon God in his grief, though the man be right bad, where the pleasure pulleth his mind another way, though the man be merely good. And this point I think there are very few that can (if they say true) say that they find it otherwise. For in tribulation,

Tribulation
generally mov-
eth the mind
most.

which cometh, you wot well, in many sundry kinds, any man that is not a dull beast, or a desperate wretch, calleth upon God, not hourly, but right heartily, and setteth his heart full whole upon his request, so sore he longeth for ease and help of his heaviness. But when men are wealthy and well at their ease, while our tongue pattereth upon our prayers apace; good God, how many mad ways our mind wandereth the while! Yet wot I well, that in some tribulation such sore sickness there is, or other grievous bodily pain, that hard it were for a long prayer of matins: and yet some that be a-dying say full devoutly the seven Psalms, and other prayers, with the priest at their anealing; but those that for the grief of their pain cannot endure to do it, or that be more tender, and lack that strong heart and

stomach that some other have, God requireth no such long prayers of them. But the lifting up of the heart alone, without any word at all, is more acceptable to him of one in such case, than long service so said, as folk use to say it in health. The martyrs in their agony made no long prayers aloud, but one inch of such a prayer so prayed in that pain, was worth a whole ell and more, even of their own prayers prayed at some other time.

God requireth
no more than
man's weak-
ness can do.

Great learned men say, that Christ, albeit he was very God, and as God, was in eternal equal bliss with his Father, yet as man merited not for us only, but for himself too; for proof whereof they lay in these words the authority of St. Paul:—*Christus humiliavit semetipsum factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis: propter quod et Deus exaltavit illum, et donavit illi nomen quod est super omne nomen: ut in nomine Jesu omne genu flectatur, caelestium, terrestrium et infernorum, et omnis lingua confiteatur, quia Dominus Jesus Christus in gloria est Dei patris*,—Christ hath humbled himself, and became obedient unto the death, and that unto the death of the cross, for which thing God hath also exalted him, and given him a name which is above all names: that in the name of Jesus every knee be bowed, both of the celestial creatures, and the terrestrial, and the infernal too: and that every tongue shall confess that our Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God his father.*

[Christ
merited.]

Now if it so be, as these great learned men upon such authorities of Holy Scripture say, that our Saviour so merited as man, and as man deserved reward, not for us only, but for himself also: then were there in his deeds, as it seemeth, sundry degrees and differences of deserving, and not his maundy-like merit, as his Passion, nor his sleep-like merit, as his watch and his prayer, no nor his prayers peradventure all of like merit neither. But though there none was, nor none could be in his most blessed person but excellent, and incomparably passing the prayer of any pure creature: yet were his own not all alike,

* Philip. ii.

The chief
prayers of
Christ.

but some one far above some other. And then if it thus be, of all his holy prayers, the chief seemeth me those that he made in his great agony and pain of his bitter passion. The first, when he fell thrice prostrate in his agony, when the heaviness of his heart with fear of death at hand, so painful and so cruel as he well beheld it, made such a fervent commotion in his blessed body, that the bloody sweat of his holy flesh dropped down on the ground.* The other were the painful prayers that he made upon the cross, where for

[Christ's
pains.]

all the torment that he hanged in of beating, nailing, and stretching out all his limbs, with the wresting of his sinews, and breaking of his tender veins, and the sharp crown of thorn so pricking him into the head, that his blessed blood streamed down all his face: in all these hideous pains, in all their cruel despites, yet two very devout and fervent prayers he made.† The one for their pardon that so despiteously put him to his pain, and the other about his own deliverance, commending his own soul unto his holy Father in heaven. These prayers of his (among all that ever he made) made in his

Prayer in tri-
bulation is
most effectual.

most pain, reckon I for the chief. And these prayers of our Saviour at his bitter passion, and of his holy martyrs in the fervour of their torment, shall serve us to see that there is no prayer made at pleasure so strong and effectual as in tribulation.

Now come I to the touching of the reason that you make, where you tell me that I grant you, that both in wealth and in woe some men may be nought, and offend God, the one by impatience, the other by fleshly lust; and on the other side, both in tribulation and prosperity too, some man may also do very well, and deserve thank of God by thanks given to God, as well of his gift of riches, worship, and wealth, as of need and penury, prisonment, sickness, and pain: and that therefore you cannot see for what cause I should give any pre-eminence in comfort unto tribulation, but rather allow prosperity for the thing more comfortable: and that not a little, but in manner by double, sith therein hath the soul comfort, and the

* Luc. xxii.

† Luc. xxiii.

body both: the soul by thank (for his gift) given unto God; and then the body, by being well at ease, where the person pained in tribulation, taketh no comfort but in his soul alone. First, as for your double comfort, cousin, you may cut off the one. For a man in prosperity, though he be bounden to thank God of his gift, wherein he feeleth ease, and may be glad also that he giveth thank to God; yet for that he taketh his ease here hath he little cause of comfort, except that the sensual feeling of bodily pleasure you list to call by the name of comfort. Nor I say not nay, but that sometime men use so to take it, when they say, this good drink comforteth well my heart. But comfort, cousin, is properly taken ^{that is} by them that take it right, rather for the consolation of good hope that men take it in their heart of some good growing toward them, than for a present pleasure, with which the body is delighted and tickled for the while.

Now though a man without patience can have no reward for his pain, yet when his pain is patiently taken for God's sake, and his will conformed to God's pleasure therein, God rewarded the sufferer after the rate of his pain, and this thing appeareth by many a place in Scripture, of which some have I shewed you, and yet shall I shew you more. But never found I any place in Scripture that I remember, in which, though the wealthy man thanked God for his gift, our Lord promised any reward in heaven, because the man took his ease and pleasure here. And therefore, sith I speak but of such comfort as is very comfort indeed, by which a man hath hope of God's favour and remission of his sins, with minishing of his pains in purgatory, or reward else in heaven: and such comfort cometh of tribulation, and for tribulation well taken, but not for pleasure, though it be well taken; therefore of your comfort that you double by prosperity, you may, as I told you, cut very well away the half. Now why I give prerogative in comfort unto tribulation far above prosperity, though a man may do well in both, of this thing will I shew you causes two or three.

First, as I before have at length shewed you, out of all question continual wealth interrupted with no tribulation is a very discomfortable token of everlasting damnation. Whereupon it followeth, that tribulation is one cause of comfort unto a man's heart, in that it dischargeth him of the discomfort that he might of reason take of overlong lasting wealth. Another is, that the Scripture much commendeth tribulation, as occasion of more profit, than wealth and prosperity, not to them only that are therein, but to them too that resort unto them. And therefore, saith Ecclesiastes: *Melius est ire ad domum luctus, quam ad domum convivii.* In illa enim finis cunctorum admonetur hominum, et vivens cogitat quid futurum sit;—Better it is to go to the house of weeping and wailing for some man's death, than to the house of a feast. For in the house of heaviness is a man put in remembrance of the end of every man, and while he yet liveth, he thinketh what shall come after.* And after yet he farther saith: *Cor sapientum, ubi tristitia est: et cor stultorum, ubi lætitia;*—The heart of wise men is there as heaviness is, and the heart of fools is there as in mirth and gladness.† And verily, there as you shall hear worldly mirth seem to be commanded in Scripture, it is either commonly spoken, as in the person of some worldly disposed people, or understood of rejoicing spiritual, or meant of some small moderate refreshing of the mind, against an heavy discomfortable dulness. Now whereas prosperity was to the children of Israel promised in the old law as a special gift of God: that was for their imperfection at that time, to draw them to God with gay things and pleasant, as men to make children learn give them cake-bread and butter. For, as the Scripture maketh mention, that people were much after the manner of children in lack of wit, and in waywardness. And therefore was their master Moses called *Pædagogus*,‡ that is, a teacher of children; or (as they call such a one in the grammar-schools), an usher or a master of the petits. For, as St.

Continual
wealth danger-
ous and dis-
comfortable.

* Eccles. vii.

† Ibidem.

‡ [Moses.]

Paul saith: *Nihil ad perfectum duxit lex*;—The old law brought nothing to perfection.* And God also threateneth folk with tribulation in this world for sin, not for that worldly tribulation is evil, but for that we should be well ware of the sickness of sin, for fear of the thing to follow: which though it be indeed a very good wholesome thing, if we will take it, is yet because it is painful the thing that we be lothe to have.

But this I say yet again and again, that as for far the better thing in this world toward the getting of the very good that God giveth in the world to come: the Scripture undoubtedly so commendeth tribulation, that in respect and comparison thereof it discommendeth this worldly wretched wealth and discomfortable comfort utterly. For to what other thing soundeth the words of Ecclesiastes that I rehearsed you now: that it is better to be in the house of heaviness, than to be at a feast?† Whereto soundeth this comparison of his, that the wise man's heart draweth thither as folk are in sadness; and the heart of a fool is there as he may find mirth? Whereto draweth this threat of the wise man, that he that delighted in wealth shall fall into woe? *Risus* (saith he) *dolore miscebitur, et extrema gaudii luctus occupat*;—Laughter shall be mingled with sorrow, and the end of mirth is taken up with heaviness.‡ And our Saviour saith himself: *Væ vobis qui ridetis, quia lugebitis et flebitis*;—Woe be to you that laugh; for you shall weep and wail.§ But he saith on the other side: *Beati qui lugent, quoniam illi consolabuntur*;—Blessed are they that weep and wail, for they shall be comforted.|| And he saith unto his disciples: *Mundus gaudebit, vos autem dolebitis: sed tristitia vestra vertetur in gaudium*;—The world shall joy, and you shall be sorry: but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.¶ And so is it, you wot well, now. And the mirth of many that then were in joy, is now turned all to sorrow. And thus you see by the Scripture plain, that in matter of very comfort, tribu-

* Heb. vii.

§ Luc. vi.

† [Eccles. vii.]

|| [Luc. vi.]

‡ Proverb. xiv.

¶ Joan. xvi.

lation is as far above prosperity, as the day is above the night.

Another pre-eminence of tribulation over wealth in occasion of merit and reward, shall well appear upon certain considerations well marked in them both. Tribulation meriteth in patience, and in the obedient conforming of the man's will unto God, and in thanks given to God for his visitation.

[How tribulation meriteth.
How a wealthy man may merit.]

If you reckon me now against these, many other good deeds that a wealthy man may do; as by riches, give alms; by authority, labour in doing many men justice, or if you find farther any such other thing like: first, I say, that the patient person in tribulation hath in all these virtues of the wealthy man an occasion of merit too, which the wealthy man hath not againward, in the fore-rehearsed virtues of his.

[When power lacketh, good will is accepted.]

For it is easy for the person that is in tribulation to be well willing to do the self-same, if he could; and then shall his good will, where the power lacketh, go very near to the merit of the deed. But now is not the wealthy man in a like case with the will of patience, and conformity, and thanks given to God for tribulation: sith it is not so ready for the wealthy man to be content to be in the tribulation that is the occasion of the patient's desert, as for the troubled person to be content to be in prosperity to do the good deeds that the wealthy man doth.

[The good will goeth near to the merit.]

Besides this, all that the wealthy man doth, though he could not do them without those things that are accounted for wealth, and called by that name, as not do great alms without great riches, nor do these many men right by his labour, without great authority: yet may he do these things, being not in wealth indeed, as where he taketh his wealth for no wealth, nor his riches for no riches, nor in heart setteth by neither nother, but secretly liveth in a contrite heart and a life penitential, as many times did the prophet David being a great king, so that worldly wealth was no wealth to him. And therefore is not of

[The good man taketh wealth for no wealth indeed.]

[David.]

necessity worldly wealth the cause of those good deeds, sith he may do them, and doth them best indeed, to whom the thing that worldly folk call wealth, is yet for his godly-set mind (drawn from the delight thereof) no pleasure in manner nor no wealth at all.

Finally, whensoever the wealthy man doth those good virtuous deeds, if we consider the nature of them right, we shall perceive, that in doing of them, he doth ever for the rate and portion of those deeds minish the matter of his worldly wealth, as in giving great alms he departeth with so much of his worldly goods, which are in that part the matter of his wealth. In labouring about the doing of many good deeds, his labour minisheth his quiet and his rest. And for the rate of so much, it minisheth his wealth, if pain and wealth be each to other contrary, as I ween you will agree they be.

~~Worldly~~
wealth is mi-
nished in some
respect, by
doing good
deeds.

Now whosoever then will well consider the thing, he shall, I doubt not, perceive and see therein that in these good deeds that the wealthy man doth, though he do them by that, that his wealth maketh him able, yet in the doing of them he departeth (for the portion) from the nature of wealth, toward the nature of some part of tribulation: and therefore, even in those good deeds themselves that prosperity doth, doth in goodness the prerogative of tribulation above wealth appear.

Now if it hap, that some man cannot perceive this point, because the wealthy man for all his alms abideth rich still, and for all his good labour abideth still in his authority; let him consider, that I speak but after the portion. And because the portion of all that he giveth of his goods is very little in respect of that he leaveth; therefore is the reason happily with some folk little perceived. But if it so were that he went forth with giving, till he had given out all and left himself nothing, then would a very blind man see it. For as he were from riches come to poverty, so were he from wealth willingly fallen into tribulation. And between labour and rest

the reason goeth all alike: which who so can consider shall see, that for the portion in every good deed done by the wealthy man, the matter is all one. Then sith we have somewhat weighed the virtues of prosperity, let us consider on the other side the aforenamed things that are the matter of merit and reward in tribulation, that is, to wit, patience, conformity, and thanks.

Three things be
matter of merit
in tribulation.

Patience.

Patience the wealthy man hath not, in that he is wealthy. For if he be pinched in any point wherein he taketh patience, in that part he suffereth some tribulation, and so not by his prosperity, but by his tribulation, hath the man that merit. Like is it if we would say, that the wealthy man hath another virtue in the stead of patience, that is to wit, the keeping of himself from pride and from such other sins as wealth would bring him to. For the resisting of such motions is, as I before told you, without any doubt a minishing of fleshly wealth, and is a very true kind, and one of the most profitable kinds of tribulation. So that all that good merit groweth to the wealthy man, not by his wealth, but by the minishing of his wealth with wholesome tribulation. The next colour of comparison is in the other twain; that is to wit, in the conformity of man's will unto God, and in thanks given unto God. For like as the good man in tribulation sent him by God, conformeth his will to God's will in that behalf, and giveth God thank therefor; so doth the wealthy man in his wealth which God giveth him conform his will to God's will in that point: sith he is well content to take it of his gift, and giveth God again also right hearty thank therefor. And thus, as I said, in these two things may you catch most colour to compare the wealthy man's merit with the merit of tribulation.

[Merit groweth
to the wealthy
man by the
minishing of
his wealth.]

[Of conformity
and thanksgiv-
ing.]

But yet that they be not matches, you may soon see by this. For in tribulation can there none conform his will unto God's, and give him thank therefor, but such a man as hath in that point a very special good mind. But he that is very nought, or hath in his heart but very little

good, may well be content to take wealth at God's hand, and say, Marry, I thank you, Sir, for this Of such there are enough. with all my heart, and will not fail to love you well, while you let me fare no worse. *Confitebitur tibi, cum benefeceris ei.** Now if the wealthy man be very good, yet in conformity of his will and thanks given to God for his wealth, his virtue is not like yet to his that doth the same in tribulation. For as the Philosophers said in that thing very well of old,† Virtue standeth in things of hardness and difficulty. And then, as I told you, much less hardness and much less difficulty there is by a great deal to be content and conform our will to God's will, and to give him thank too for our ease, than for our pain; for our wealth than for our woe. And therefore is the conforming of our will unto God's, and the thanks that we give him for our tribulation, more worthy thank again, and more reward meriteth in the very fast wealth and felicity of heaven, than our conformity with our thanks given for and in our worldly wealth here.

And this thing saw the devil, when he said to our Lord of Job, that it was no marvel though Job had a reverent fear unto God,‡ God had done so much for him, and kept him in prosperity. But the devil wist well it was an hard thing for Job to be so loving, and so to give thanks to God in tribulation and adversity, and therefore was he glad to get leave of God to put him in tribulation, and thereby trusted to cause him murmur and grudge against God with impatience. But the devil had there a fall in his own turn. For the patience of Job in the short time of his adversity gat him much more favour and thank of God, and more is he renowned in Scripture, and commended there for that than for all the goodness of his long prosperous life. Our Saviour saith himself also, that if we say well by them, or yield them thank that do us good, we do no great thing therein, and therefore can we with reason look for no great thank again.§ And thus

* Psal. xxviii.

† Job. i.

‡ Ethic. ii.

§ [Luc. vi. Matth. v.]

have I shewed you, lo ! no little pre-eminence that tribulation hath in merit, and therefore no little pre-eminence of comfort in hope of heavenly reward, above the virtues (the merit and cause of good hope and comfort) that cometh of wealth and prosperity.

CHAPTER XX.

A summary Commendation of Tribulation.

AND therefore, good cousin, to finish our talking for this time, lest I should be too long a let unto your other business, if we lay first for a sure ground a The foundation of faith. very fast faith, whereby we believe to be true all that the Scripture saith understanden truly, as the holy doctors declare it, and as the Spirit of God instructeth his Catholic church; then shall we consider tribulation as a gracious gift of God, a gift that he gave specially his special The peculiar good properties of tribulation. friends, the thing that in Scripture is highly commended and praised, a thing whereof the contrary long continued is perilous, a thing which but if God send it, men have need by penance to put upon themselves and seek it, a thing that helpeth to purge our sins passed, a thing that preserveth us from sins that else would come, a thing that causeth us to set less by the world, a thing that exciteth us to draw more toward God, a thing that much minisheth our pains in purgatory, a thing that much increaseth our final reward in heaven, the thing by which our Saviour entered his own kingdom, the thing with which all his apostles followed him thither, the thing which our Saviour exhorteth all men to, the thing without which (he saith) we be not his disciples, the thing without which no man can get to heaven.

Whoso these things thinketh on and remembereth well, shall in his tribulation neither How profitable tribulation is. murmur nor grudge; but first by patience take his pain in worth, and then shall he grow in goodness and think

himself well worthy. Then shall he consider that God sendeth it for his weal, and thereby shall he be moved to give God thank therefor. Therewith shall his grace increase, and God shall give him such comfort, by considering that God is in his trouble evermore near unto him, —(*Quia Deus juxta est iis qui tribulato sunt corde*;—God is near, saith the prophet, to those that have their heart in trouble):* that his joy thereof shall minish much of his pain, and he shall not seek for vain comfort elsewhere, but specially trust in God, and seek for help of him, submitting his own will wholly to God's pleasure, and pray to God in his heart, and pray his friends pray for him, and specially the priests, as St. James biddeth,† and begin first with confession, and make us clean to God and ready to depart, and be glad to go to God, putting purgatory to his pleasure.

What he that
is in tribulation
should be.

It is an ill sign
to be loth to
die.

[Of loathness
to die and glad-
ness to die.]

If we thus do, this dare I boldly say, we shall never live here the less of half an hour, but shall with this comfort find our hearts lighted, and thereby the grief of our tribulation lessed, and the more likelihood to recover and to live the longer. Now if God will we shall hence, then doth he much more for us. For he that this way taketh, cannot go but well. For of him that is loth to leave this wretched world, my heart is much in fear lest he die not well. Hard it is for him to be welcome that cometh against his will, that saith to God when he cometh to him, Welcome my maker, maugre my teeth. But he that so loveth him that he longeth to go to him, my heart cannot give me but he shall be welcome, all were it so, that he should come ere he were well purged. For charity covereth a multitude of sins, and he that trusteth in God cannot be confounded. And Christ saith, He that cometh to me, I will not cast him out.‡ And therefore let us never make our reckoning of long life; keep it while we may, because God hath so commanded. But if

* Psal. xxxiv.

† Jacobi x.

‡ Proverb. x. [And Proverb. iv.] Johan. vi.

God give the occasion that with his good will we may go, let us be glad thereof, and long to go to him. And then shall hope of heaven comfort our heaviness, and out of our transitory tribulation shall we go to everlasting glory, to which, my good cousin, I pray God bring us both.

VINCENT.—Mine own good uncle, I pray God reward you, and at this time will I no longer trouble you. I trow I have this day done you much tribulation with my importune objections of very little substance. And you have even shewed me an ensample of sufferance, in bearing my folly so long and so patiently. And yet shall I be so bold upon you farther, as to seek some time to talk forth of the remnant, that most profitable point of tribulation, which you said you reserved to treat of last of all.

ANTONY.—Let that be hardily very shortly, cousin, while this is fresh in mind.

VINCENT.—I trust, good uncle, so to put this in remembrance, that it shall never be forgotten with me. Our Lord send you such comfort as he knoweth to be best.

ANTONY.—That is well said, good cousin, and I pray the same for you and for all our other friends that have need of comfort, for whom, I think, more than for yourself, you needed of some counsel.

VINCENT.—I shall with this good counsel, that I have heard of you, do them some comfort, I trust in God : to whose keeping I commit you.

ANTONY.—And I you also. Farewell, mine own good cousin.

BOOK II.



INCIDENT.—It is to me, good uncle, no little comfort, that as I came in here I heard of your folk, that you have had since my last being here (God be thanked!) meetly good rest, and your stomach somewhat more come to you. For verily, albeit I had heard before, that in respect of the great grief that for a month's space had holden you, you were a little before my last coming to you somewhat eased and relieved (for else would not I for no good have put you to the pain to talk so much as you then did); yet after my departing from you, remembering how long we tarried together, and that while we were all that while in talking all the labour was yours, in talking so long together without interpausing between, and that of matter studious and displeasing, all of disease and sickness, and other pain and tribulation; I was in good faith very sorry, and not a little wroth with myself for mine own oversight, that I had so little considered your pain, and very feared I was (till I heard other word) lest you should have waxen weaker, and more sick thereafter. But now I thank our Lord that hath sent the contrary: for else a little casting back were in this great age of yours no little danger and peril.

ANTONY.—Nay, nay, good cousin, to talk much (except some other pain let me) is to me little grief. A fond old man is often as full of words as a woman. It is, you wot well, as some poets paint us, all the last of an old fool's

life to sit well and warm with a cup and a roasted crab, and drivel, and drink, and talk. But in earnest, cousin, our talking was to me great comfort, and nothing displeasing at all. For though we commenced of sorrow and heaviness, yet was the thing that we chiefly thought upon, not the tribulation itself, but the comfort that may grow thereon. And therefore am I now very glad that you be come to finish up the remnant.

VINCENT.—Of truth, my good uncle, it was comfortable to me, and hath been since to some other of your friends, to whom, as my poor wit and remembrance would serve me, I did, and not needlessly, report and rehearse your most comfortable counsel. And now come I for the remnant, and am very joyful that I find you so well refreshed, and so ready thereto. But this one thing, good uncle, I beseech you heartily, that if for delight to hear you speak in the matter I forget myself and you both, and put you to too much pain, remember you your own ease, and when you lust to leave, command me to go my way and to seek some other time.

ANTONY.—Forsooth, cousin, many words, if a man were weak, spoken, as you said right now, without interpausing, would peradventure at length somewhat weary him. And therefore wished I the last time after you were gone, when I felt myself (to say the truth) even a little weary, that I had not so told you still a long tale alone, but that we had more often interchanged words, and parted the talking between us, with oft interparling upon your part, in such manner as learned men use between the persons whom they devise disputing in their famed dialogues. But yet in that point I soon excused you, and laid the lack even where I found it, and that was even upon mine own neck. For I remembered that between you and me it fared, as it did once between a nun and her brother. Very virtuous was this lady, and of a very virtuous place in a A merry tale. close religion, and therein had been long, in all which time she had never seen her brother, which was in likewise very virtuous, and had been far off at an university, and had there taken the degree of doctor in divinity.

When he was come home he went to see his sister, as he that highly rejoiced in her virtue. So came she to the grate that they call, I trow, the locutory, and after their holy watch-word spoken on both sides, after the manner used in that place, the one took the other by the tip of the finger (for hand would there be none wrongen through the grate), and forthwith began my lady to give her brother a sermon of the wretchedness of this world, and the frailty of the flesh, and the subtle flights of the wicked fiend, and gave him surely good counsel, saving somewhat too long, how he should be well ware in his living, and master well his body for saving of his soul; and yet, ere her own tale came all at an end, she began to find a little fault with him, and said: "In good faith, brother, I do somewhat marvel that you, that have been at learning so long, and are doctor, and so learned in the law of God, do not now at our meeting (seeing we meet so seldom), to me that am your sister and a simple unlearned soul, give of your charity some fruitful exhortation. For I doubt not but you can say some good thing yourself." "By my troth, good sister," quoth her brother, "I can not for you. For your tongue hath never ceased, but said enough for us both." And so, cousin, I remember, that when I was fallen in, I left you little space to say aught between. But now, will I, therefore, take another way with you; for I shall of our talking drive you to the one-half.

VINCENT.—Now forsooth, uncle, this was a merry tale. But now if you make me talk the one-half, then shall you be contented far otherwise than there was of late a kinswoman of your own, but which I will not tell you; guess her an you can. Her husband Another merry jest. had much pleasure in the manner and behaviour of another honest man, and kept him therefore much company; by the reason whereof he was at his mealtime the more often from home. So happened it on a time, that his wife and he together dined or supped with that neighbour of theirs, and then she made a merry quarrel to him for making her husband so good cheer out a-door, that she could not have him at home. "For-

sooth, mistress," quoth he (as he was a dry merry man), "in my company nothing keepeth him but one; serve you him with the same, and he will never be from you." "What gay thing may that be?" quoth our cousin then. "Forsooth mistress," quoth he, "your husband loveth well to talk, and when he sitteth with me, I let him have all the words." "All the words!" quoth she. "Marry that I am content, he shall have all the words with a good will, as he hath ever had. For I speak them not all to myself, but give them all to him; and for aught that I care for them, he shall have them still. But otherwise to say, that he shall have them all, you shall rather keep him still, than he shall get the one-half at my hands."

ANTONY.—Forsooth, cousin, I can soon guess which of our kin she was. I would we had none therein (for all her merry words) that less would let their husbands to talk.

VINCENT.—Forsooth she is not so merry, but she is as good. But where you find fault, uncle, that I speak not enough, I was in good faith ashamed, that I spake so much, and moved you such questions, as I found upon your answer (might better have been spared) they were so little worth. But now sith I see you be so well content, that I shall not forbear boldly to shew my folly, I will be no more shamefast, but ask you what me list.

CHAPTER I.

Whether a man may not in Tribulation use some worldly recreation for his Comfort.



AND first, good uncle, ere we proceed farther, I will be bold to move you one thing more of that we talked when I was here before. For when I revolved in my mind again the things that were concluded here by you, methought ye would in nowise, that in any tribulation men should seek for comfort either in worldly thing or fleshly, which mind, uncle, of yours, seemeth somewhat hard. For a merry tale with a friend refresheth a man much, and without any harm lighteth his mind, and amendeth his courage and stomach; so that it seemeth but well done to take such recreation. And Solomon saith, I trow, that men should in heaviness give the sorry man wine, to make him forget his sorrow.* And St. Thomas saith, that proper pleasant talking, which is called εὐτραπεία,† is a good virtue, serving to refresh the mind, and make it quick and lusty to labour and study again, where continual fatigation would make it dull and deadly.

ANTONY.—Cousin, I forgot not that point, but I longed not much to touch it. For neither might I well utterly forbid it, where the cause might hap to fall that it should not hurt; and on the other side if the case so should fall, methought yet I should little need to give any counsel to it. Folk are prone enough to such fantasies of their

* Proverb. xxxi.

† Secund. 2, q. 168, art. 2.

own mind. You may see this by ourself, which coming now together, to talk of is earnest sad matter as men can devise, were fallen yet even at the first into wanton idle tales. And of truth, cousin, as you know very well, myself are of nature even half a gigglot and more. I would I could as easily mend my fault, as I can well know it; but scant can I refrain it, as old a fool as I am.

Howbeit so partial will I not be to my fault, as to praise it; but for that you require my mind in the matter, whether men in tribulation may not lawfully seek recreation, and comfort themselves with some honest mirth: first, agree that our chief comfort must be in God, and that with him we must begin, and with him continue, and with him end also: a man to take now and then Of honest worldly mirth. some honest worldly mirth, I dare not be so sore as utterly to forbid it, sith good men and well-learned have in some case allowed it, specially for the diversity of divers men's minds. For else, if we were all such, as would God we were! and such as natural wisdom would we should be, and is not all clean excusable that we be not in deed: I would then put no doubt, but that unto any man the most comfortable talking that could be were to hear of heaven: whereas now, God help us! our wretchedness is such, that in talking a while thereof, men wax almost weary, and as though to hear of heaven were an heavy burden, they must refresh themselves after with a foolish tale. Our affection toward heavenly joys waxeth wonderful cold. If dread of hell were as far gone, very few would fear God: but that yet a little sticketh in our stomachs. Mark me, cousin, at the sermon, and commonly towards the end, somewhat the preacher speaketh of hell and heaven. Now, while he preacheth of the pains of hell, still they stand yet and give him the hearing; but as soon as he cometh to the joys of heaven, they be busking them backward and flock-meal fall away. It is in the soul somewhat as it is in the body. Some are there of stature, or of evil custom, come to that point, that a worse thing sometime steadeth them more than

Our most comfortable talk should be of God and heaven.

a better. Some man, if he be sick, can away with no wholesome meat, nor no medicine can go down with him, but if it be tempered with some such thing for his fantasy, as maketh the meat or the medicine less wholesome than it should be. And yet while it will be no better, we must let him have it so. Cassianus, that very virtuous man, rehearseth in a certain collection of his,* that a certain holy father, in making of a sermon, spake of heaven and heavenly things so celestially, that much of his audience with the sweet sound thereof began to forget all the world, and fall asleep. Which, when the father beheld, he dissembled their sleeping, and suddenly said unto them, I shall tell you a merry tale. At which word, they lifted up their heads and harkened unto that. And after the sleep therewith broken, heard him tell on of heaven again. In what wise that good father rebuked them their untoward minds, so dull unto the thing that all our life we labour for, and so quick and lusty toward other trifles, I neither bear in mind, nor shall here need to rehearse. But thus much of the matter sufficeth for our purpose, that whereas you demand me whether in tribulation men may not sometime refresh themselves with worldly mirth and recreation; I can no more say, but he that cannot long endure to hold up his head and hear talking of heaven, except he be now and then between (as though to hear of heaven were heaviness) refreshed with a merry foolish tale, there is none other remedy, but you must let him have it. Better would I wish it, but I cannot help it.

Howbeit, let us by mine advice at the leastwise make those kinds of recreation as short and as seld
The right use of recreation. as we can. Let them serve us but for sauce, and make them not our meat: and let us pray unto God, and all our good friends for us, that we may feel such a savour in the delight of heaven, that in respect of the talking of the joys thereof, all worldly recreation be but a grief to think on. And be sure, cousin, that if we might once purchase the grace to come to that point, we never found of worldly recreation so much comfort in

* Lib. v. cap. 31.

a year, as we should find in the bethinking us of heaven in less than half an hour.

VINCENT.—In faith, uncle, I can well agree to this: and I pray God bring us once to take such a savour in it. And surely, as you began the other day, by faith must we come to it, and to faith, by prayer. But now I pray you, good uncle, vouchsafe to proceed in our principal matter.

CHAPTER II.

Of the short uncertain life in extreme age or sickness.



ANTONY.—COUSIN, I have bethought me somewhat upon this matter since we were last together. And I find it, if we should go some way to work, a thing that would require many more days to treat thereof than we shall haply find meet thereto, in so few as myself ween that I have now to live, while every time is not like with me, and among many painful, in which I look every day to depart, my mending days coming very seld and are very shortly gone. For surely, cousin, I cannot liken my life more meetly now than to the snuff of a candle that burneth within the candlestick's nose. For as the snuff sometime burneth down so low, that whoso looketh on it would ween it were quite out, and yet suddenly lifteth a flame half an inch above the nose and giveth a pretty short light again, and thus playeth divers times, till at last ere it be looked for out it goeth altogether: so have I, cousin, divers such days together, as every day of them I look even for to die: and yet have I then after that time such few days again, as you see me now to have yourself, in which a man would ween that I might yet well continue. But I know my lingering not likely to last long, but out will my snuff suddenly some day within a while, and therefore will I with God's help, seem I never so well amended, nevertheless reckon every day for my last.

A proverb. For though that to the repressing of the bold courage of blind youth, there is a very true proverb, that

as soon cometh a young sheep's skin to the market as an old ; yet this difference there is at least between them, that as the young man may hap sometime to die soon, so the old man can never live long. And therefore, cousin, in one matter here, leaving out many things that I would else treat of, I shall for this time speak but of very few. Howbeit, if God hereafter send me moe such days, then will we, when you list, farther talk of moe.

CHAPTER III.

He divideth Tribulation into three kinds, of which three the last he passeth shortly over.



ALL manner of tribulation, cousin, that any man can have, as far as for this time cometh to my mind, falleth under some one at the least of these three kinds, either it is such as himself willingly taketh, or secondly such as himself willingly suffereth, or finally such as he cannot put from him. This third kind I purpose not much more to speak of now. For thereof shall, as for this time, suffice those things, that we treated between us this other day. What kind of tribulation this is, I am sure yourself perceive. For sickness, imprisonment, loss of goods, loss of friends, or such bodily harm as a man hath already caught, and can in nowise avoid, these things and such like are the third kind of tribulation that I speak of, which a man neither willingly taketh in the beginning, nor can, though he would, put afterward away. Now think I, that as to the man that lacketh wit and faith, no comfort can serve, whatsoever counsel be given: so to them that have both, I have as for this kind said in manner enough already. And considering, that suffer it needs he must, while he can by no manner of mean put it from him, the very necessity is half counsel enough, to take it in good worth and bear it patiently, and rather of his patience to take both ease and thank, than by fretting and fuming to increase his present pain, and by murmur and grudge fall in farther danger after by displeasing of God with his froward behaviour. And yet, albeit that I think that that which is said sufficeth, yet here and there shall I, in the second kind, shew some such comfort as shall well serve unto this last kind too.

Necessity
maketh
virtue.

CHAPTER IV.



HE first kind also will I shortly pass over too. For the tribulation that a man willingly taketh himself, which no man putteth upon him against his own will, is (you wot well) as I somewhat touched the last day, such affliction of the flesh, or expense of his goods, as a man taketh himself, or willingly bestoweth in punishment of his own sin and for devotion to God. Now in this tribulation needeth he no man to comfort him. For while no man troubleth him but himself, which feeleth him far forth he may conveniently bear, and of reason and good discretion shall not pass that, wherein if any doubt arise, counsel needeth, and not comfort; the courage that for God's sake and his soul's health kindleth his heart and enflameth it thereto, shall by the same grace that put it in his mind, give him such comfort and joy therein that the pleasure of his soul shall pass the pain of his body: yea, and while he hath in heart also some great heaviness for his sin, yet when he considereth the joy that shall come of it, his soul shall not fail to feel then that strange case, which my body felt once in a great fever.

VINCENT.—What strange case was that, uncle?

ANTONY.—Forsooth, cousin, even in this same bed (it is now more than fifteen years ago) I lay in a tertian, and had passed, I trow, three or four fits: but after fell there one fit on me out of course, so strange and so a strange fit of a fever. marvellous, that I would in good faith have thought it impossible. For I suddenly felt myself verily both hot and cold throughout all my body, hot in some

part the one, and in some part the other, for that had been, you wot well, no very strange thing to feel the head hot while the hands were cold; but the self-same parts, I say, so God my soul save! I sensibly felt, and right painfully too, all in one instant both hot and cold at once.

VINCENT.—By my troth, uncle, this was a wonderful thing, and such as I never heard happen any man else in my days; and few men are there, of whose mouths I could have believed it.

ANTONY.—Courtesy, cousin, peradventure, letteth you to say, that you believe it not yet of my mouth neither; and surely for fear of that, you should not have heard it of me neither, had there not another thing happed me soon after.

VINCENT.—I pray you, what was that, good uncle?

ANTONY.—Forsooth, cousin, this I asked a physician or twain, that then looked unto me, how this should be possible; and they twain told me both that it could not be so, but that I was fallen into some slumber, and dreamed that I felt it so.

VINCENT.—This hap, hold I, little causeth you to tell the tale the more boldly.

ANTONY.—No, cousin, that is true, lo. But then happed there another, that a young girl here in this town, whom a kinsman of hers had begun to teach physick, told me, that there was such a kind of fever indeed.

VINCENT.—By our Lady! uncle, save for the credence of you, that tale would I not yet tell again upon that hap of a maid. For though I know her now for such as I durst well believe her, it might hap her very well at that time to lie, because she would you should take her for cunning.

ANTONY.—Yea, but there happed there yet another hap thereon, cousin, that a work of Galen, *De Differentiis Februm*, is ready to be sold in the booksellers' shops. In which work she shewed me then that chapter where Galen saith the same.

VINCENT.—Marry, uncle, as you say, that hap happed well; and that maid hath (as hap was) in that one point more cunning than had both our physicians besides, and hath, I ween, at this day in many points more.

ANTONY.—In faith so ween I too : and that is well wared on her ; for she is very wise and well learned, and very virtuous too. But see now, what age is, lo ! I have been so long in my tale, that I have almost forgotten for what purpose I told it. Oh ! now I remember me, lo. Likewise I say, as myself felt my body then both hot and cold at once ; so he, that is contrite and heavy for his sin, shall have cause for to be, and shall indeed be, both sad and glad, and both twain at once, and shall do, as I remember holy St. Hierome biddeth : *Et doleas, et de dolore gaudeas*. Both be thou sorry, saith he, and be thou of thy sorrow joyful also.

And thus, as I began to say, of comfort to be given unto him that is in this tribulation, that is to wit, in fruitful heaviness and penance for his sin, shall we none heed to give other than only to remember and consider well the goodness of God's excellent mercy, that infinitely passeth the malice of all men's sin, by which he is ready to receive every man, and did spread his arms abroad upon the cross, lovingly to embrace all them that will come, and even there accepted the thief at his last end that turned not to God till he might steal no longer, and yet maketh more feast in heaven at one that from sin turneth, than of ninety and nine good men that sinned not at all.* And therefore of that first kind will I make no longer tale.

* Luc. xv.

CHAPTER V.

An Objection concerning them that turn not to God, till they come at the last cast.



INCENT.—FORSOOTH, uncle, this is unto that kind comfort very great, and so great also, that it may make many a man bold to abide in his sin, even unto his last end, trusting to be then saved, as that thief was.

ANTONY.—Very sooth you say, cousin, that some wretches are there such, that in such wise abuse the great goodness of God, that the better that he is, the worse again be they. But, cousin, though there be more joy made of his turning that from the point of perdition cometh to salvation, for pity that God had and his saints all, of the peril of perishing that the man stood in: yet is he not set in like state in heaven as he should have been, if he had lived better before, except it so fall that he live so well after, and do so much good, that he therein outrun in the shorter time those good folk that yet did not so much in much longer, as is proved in the blessed apostle St. Paul,* which of a persecutor became an apostle, and last of all came in unto that office, and yet in the labour of sowing the seed of Christ's faith, outran all the remnant so far forth, that he letted not to say of himself, *Abundantius illis omnibus laboravi*,—I have laboured more than all the remnant have. But yet, my cousin, though God (I doubt not) be so merciful unto them, that at any time in their life turn and ask his

* 1 Cor. xv.

mercy and trust therein, though it be at the last end of a man's life, and hireth him as well for heaven, that cometh to work in his vineyard toward night, at such time as workmen leave work and go home (being then in will to work if the time would serve), as he hireth him that cometh in the morning: yet may there no man upon the trust of this parable be bold all his life to lie still in sin. For let him remember, that into God's vineyard there goeth no man, but he that is called thither. Now, he that in hope to be called toward night, will sleep out the morning, and drink out the day, is full likely to pass at night unspoken to, and then shall he with shrewd rest go supperless to bed.

They tell of one that was wont alway to say, that all the while he lived he would do what he list, for three words, when he died, should make all safe enough. But then so happed it, that long ere he were old, his horse once stumbled upon a broken bridge, and as he laboured to recover him, when he saw it would not be, but down into the flood headlong needs he should: in a sudden flight he cried out in the falling, Have all to the devil! And there was he drowned with his three words ere he died, whereon his hope hung all his wretched life. And, therefore, let no man sin in hope of grace: for grace cometh but at God's will, and that mind may be the let, that grace of fruitful repenting shall never after be offered him, but that he shall either graceless go linger on careless, or with a care fruitless, fall into despair.

CHAPTER VI.

An Objection of them that say, that Tribulation of penance needeth not, but is a superstitious folly.



INCENT.—FORSOOTH, uncle, in this point methinketh you say very well. But there are they some again that say on the tother side, that heaviness of our sins we shall need none at all, but only change our purpose and intend to do better, and for all

A right description of heretics and libertines of our time.

that which is passed, take no thought at all.

And as for fasting or other affliction of the body, they say we should not do it but only to tame the flesh, when we feel it wax wanton and begin to rebel. For fasting, they say, serveth to keep the body in a temperance. But for to fast for penance, or to do any other good work, alms-deed and other, toward satisfaction for our own sin; this thing they call plain injury to the passion of Christ, by which only are our sins forgiven freely without any recompense of our own. And they that would do penance for their own sins, look to be their own Christs, and pay their own ransoms, and

These reasons reign now in no places than Saxony.

save their souls themselves. And with these reasons in Saxony, many cast fasting off, and all other bodily affliction, save only where

need requireth to bring the body to temperance. For other good, they say, can it none do to ourself; and then to our neighbour can it do none at all, and therefore they condemn it for superstitious folly. Now, heaviness of heart and weeping for our sins, this they reckon shame almost and womanish peevishness. Howbeit

(thanked be God!) their women wax there now so mannish, that they be not peevish, nor so poor of spirit, but that they can sin on as men do, and be neither afraid, nor ashamed, nor weep for their sins at all. And surely, mine uncle, I have marvelled much the less ever since that I heard the manner of their preachers there. For, as you remember, when I was in Saxony, these matters were in manner but in a mammering, nor Luther was not then wed yet, nor religious men out of their habit, but suffered (where those were that would be of the sect) freely to preach what they would to the people. And forsooth, I heard a religious man there myself, one that had been reputed and taken for very good, and which, as far as the folk perceived, was of his own living somewhat austere and sharp, but his preaching was wonderful. Methink I hear him yet, his voice was so loud and shrill, his learning less than mean. But whereas his matter was much part against fasting and all affliction for any penance, which he called men's inventions, he cried ever out upon them, to keep well the laws of Christ. Let go their peevish penance, and purpose then to mend, and seek nothing to salvation but the death of Christ. For he is our justice, and he is our Saviour, and our whole satisfaction for all our deadly sins. He did full penance for us all upon his painful cross, he washed us there all clean with the water of his sweet side, and brought us out of the devil's danger with his dear precious blood. Leave, therefore, leave, I beseech you, these inventions of men, your foolish Lenten fasts, and your peevish penance, minish never Christ's thank, nor look to save yourself. It is Christ's death, I tell you, that must save us all: Christ's death, I tell you, yet again, and not your own deeds. Leave your own fasting, therefore, and lean to Christ alone, good Christian people, for Christ's dear bitter passion.

Such mannish women are not in Saxony only.

A right Protestant preaching.

These be they that say, lo! here is Christ, and there is Christ.

Now so loud and so shrill he cried Christ in their ears, and so thick he came forth with Christ's bitter passion, and that so bitterly

Such preachers bequile the people by pretence of Christ's passion.

spoken, with the sweat dropping down his cheeks, that I marvelled not though I saw the poor women weep. For he made my own hair stand up upon my head; and with such preaching were the people so brought in, that some fell to break their fasts on the fasting days, not of frailty or of malice first, but almost of devotion, lest they should take from Christ the thank of his bitter passion. But when they were a while nuselled in that point first, they could abide and endure after many things more, with which had he then begun, they would have pulled him down.

God send us
better preach-
ers!

ANTONY.—Cousin, God amend that man, whatsoever he be, and God keep all good folk from such manner of preachers! Such one preacher much more abuseth the name of Christ and of his bitter passion, than five hundred hazarders that in their idle business swear and forswear themselves by his holy bitter passion at dice. They carry the minds of the people from the perceiving of their craft, by the continual naming of the name of Christ: and crying his passion so shrill into their ears, they forget that the Church hath ever taught them, that all our penance without Christ's

Five hundred
hazarders at
dice blaspheme
not Christ so
much as one
such preacher.

passion were not worth a pease. And they make the people ween, that we would be saved by our own deeds without Christ's death: where we confess, that his only passion meriteth incomparably more for us, than all our own deeds do: but his pleasure is, that we shall also take pain our own self with him, and therefore he biddeth all that will be his disciples, take their crosses upon their backs as he did, and with their crosses follow him.*

And where they say, that fasting serveth but for temperance, to tame the flesh and keep it from wantonness, I would in good faith have weened that Moses had not been so wild,† that for the taming of his flesh he should have need to fast whole forty days together.‡ No nor holy neither, nor yet our Saviour himself which began,

* Marc. xv. Matth. xvi. Luc. ix.

† Exod. xxxiv.

‡ 3 Reg. xix.

and the apostles followed, and all Christendom have kept the Lenten forty days fast, that these folk call now so foolish. King Achab* was not disposed to be wanton in his flesh, when he fasted and went clothed in sack-cloth and all besprent with ashes. Nor no more was in Ninive the king and all the city,† but they wailed, and did painful penance for their sin, to procure God to pity them and withdraw his indignation. Anna‡ that in her widowhood abode so many years with fasting and praying in the Temple till the birth of Christ, was not, I ween, in her old age so sore disposed to the wantonness of her flesh, that she fasted all therefor. Nor St. Paul§ that fasted so much, fasted not all therefor neither. The Scripture is full of places that prove fasting not to be the invention of man, but the institution of God, and that it hath many mo profits than one. And that the fasting of one man may do good to another, our Saviour sheweth himself, where he saith, that some kind of devils cannot be by one man cast out of another, *Nisi in oratione et jejuni*o,—without prayer and fasting.||

And therefore I marvel that they take this way against fasting and other bodily penance, and yet much more I marvel, that they mislike the sorrow and heaviness and displeasure of mind that a man should take in forethinking of his sin. The prophet saith: *Scindite corda vestra, et non vestimenta*,—Tear your hearts (he saith) and not your clothes.¶ And the prophet David saith: *Cor contritum et humiliatum, Deus, non despicias*,—A contrite heart and an humbled,** that is to say, a heart broken, torn, and with tribulation of heaviness for his sins laid alow under foot, shalt thou not, good Lord, despise. He saith also of his own contrition: *Laboravi in gemitu meo, lavabo per singulas noctes lectum meum, lachrymis meis stratum meum rigabo*,—I have laboured in my wailing, I shall every night wash my bed with my tears, my couch will I water.†† But what should I need in this matter to lay forth one place or twain? The Scripture is full of those places, by which it plainly appeareth, that

* 3 Reg. xii.

|| Marc. ix.

† Jonæ iii.

¶ Joel ii.

‡ Luc. iii.

** Psal. i.

§ 2 Cor. xi.

†† Psal. vi.

God looketh of duty, not only that we should amend and
God willet us
of duty, to weep
and bewail our
sins. be better in the time to come, but also be
sorry, and weep, and bewail our sins com-
mitted before, and all the holy doctors be full
and whole of that mind, that men must have (for their
sins) contrition and sorrow in heart.

CHAPTER VII.

What if a man cannot weep, nor in his heart be sorry for his sin.



INCENT.—FORSOOTH, uncle, yet seemeth me this thing somewhat a sore sentence, not for that I think otherwise, but that there is good cause and great, wherefore a man so should: but for that of truth some man cannot be sorry and heavy for his sin that he hath done, though he never so fain would. But though he can be content for God's sake, to forbear it from thenceforth, yet for every sin that is passed can he not only not weep, but some were haply so wanton, that when he happeth to remember them, he can scanty forbear to laugh. Now, if contrition and sorrow of heart be requisite of necessity to remission; many a man should stand, as it seemeth, in a very perilous case.

ANTONY.—Many so should indeed, cousin, and indeed many so do. And the old saints write very sore in this point. Howbeit, *Misericordia Domini super omnia opera ejus*,—The mercy of God is above all his works,* and he standeth bound to no common rule. *Et ipse cognovit figmentum suum, et propitiatur infirmitatibus nostris*,—And he knoweth the frailty of this earthen vessel that is of his own making, and is merciful, and hath pity and compassion upon our feeble infirmities,† and shall not exact of us above that thing that we may do. But yet, cousin, he that findeth himself in that case, note well this good counsel. in that he is minded to do well hereafter, let

* Psal. cxliv.

† Psal. cii.

him give God thanks that he is no worse: but in that he cannot be sorry for his sin past, let him be sorry hardly that he is no better. And as St. Jerome biddeth him that for his sin sorroweth in his heart, be glad and rejoyce in his sorrow: so would I counsel him that cannot be sad for his sin, to be sorry yet at the least that he cannot be sorry.

Besides this, though I would in nowise any man should despair, yet would I counsel such a man, while that affection lasteth, not to be too bold of courage, but live in double fear. First, for it is a token either of faint faith, or of a dull diligence. For surely if we believe in God, and therewith deeply consider his High Majesty with the peril of our sin, and the great goodness of God also: either should dread make us tremble and break our stony heart, or love should for sorrow relent it into tears. Besides this, I can scant believe, but sith so little misliking of our old sin is an affection not very pure and clean, and none unclean thing shall enter into heaven; cleansed shall it be and purified, before that we come thither. And, therefore, would I farther advise one in that case, the counsel which M. Gerson giveth every man, that sith the body and the soul together make the whole man, the less affliction that he feeleth in his soul, the more pain in recompense let him put upon his body, and purge the spirit by the affliction of the flesh. And he that so doth, I dare lay my life, shall have his hard heart after relent into tears, and his soul in an wholesome heaviness and heavenly gladness too, specially if, which must be joined with every good thing, he join faithful prayer therewith.

Good counsel
how to make
ourselves sorry
for our sins.

But, cousin, as I told you the other day before, in these matters with these new men will I not dispute. But surely for mine own part I cannot well hold with them. For, as far as mine own poor wit can perceive, the Holy Scripture of God is very plain against them, and the whole corps of Christendom in every Christian region, and the very places in which they dwell themselves, have ever unto their own days clearly believed against them, and all the old holy doctors

No wisdom to
hold with new
opinions, and
why.

have evermore taught against them, and all the old holy interpreters have construed the Scripture against them. And, therefore, if these men have now perceived so late, that the Scripture hath been misunderstanden all this while, and that of all those old holy doctors no man could understand it; then am I too old at this age to begin to study it now. And trust these men's cunning, cousin, that dare I not, in nowise, sith I cannot see nor perceive no cause, wherefore I should think, that these men might not now in the understanding of Scripture, Mark well this reason. as well be deceived themselves, as they bear us in hand, that all those other have been all this while before.

Howbeit, cousin, if so it be, that their way be not wrong, but that they have found out so easy a way to heaven, as to take no thought, but make merry, nor take no penance at all, but sit them down and drink well for our Saviour's sake, sit cock-a-hoop and fill in all the cups at once, and then let Christ's passion pay for all the shot, I am not he that will envy their good hap, but surely counsel dare I give no man, to adventure that way with them. But such as fear lest that way be not sure, and take upon them willingly tribulation of penance, what comfort they do take and well may take therein, that have I somewhat told you already. And sith these other folk sit so merry without such tribulation; we need to talk to them, you wot well, of no such manner comfort. And therefore of this kind of tribulation will I make an end.

Christ himself saith, that the way to heaven is not so easy, but narrow and hard.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of that kind of Tribulation which, though they not willingly take, yet they willingly suffer.



TRIBUTATION.—VERILY, good uncle, so may you well do : for you have brought it unto very good pass. And now I require you to come to that other kind, of which you purposed alway to treat last.

ANTONY.—That shall I, cousin, very gladly do. The other kind is this, which I rehearsed second, and sorting out the other twain, have kept it for the last. This kind of tribulation is, you wot well, of them that willingly suffer tribulation, though of their own choice they took it not at the first.

Temptation. This kind, cousin, divide we shall into
Persecution. twain. The first might we call temptation : the second, persecution. But here must you consider that I mean not every kind of persecution, but that kind only which, though the sufferer would be loth to fall in, yet will he rather abide it and suffer, than by the flitting from it fall in the displeasure of God, or leave God's pleasure unprocured. Howbeit, if we consider these two things well, temptation and persecution, we may find that either of them is incident to the other. For both by temptation the devil persecuteth us, and by persecution the devil also tempteth us ; and as persecution is tribulation to everyman, so is temptation tribulation to a good man. Now, though the devil, our spiritual enemy, fight against man in both, yet this difference hath the

common temptation from the persecution, that temptation is, as it were, the fiend's train, and persecution his plain open fight. And, therefore, will I now call all this kind of tribulation here by the name of temptation, and that shall I divide into two parts. The first shall I call the devil's trains; the other, his open fight.

How temptation
differs from per-
secution.

CHAPTER IX.

First, of Temptation in general as it is common to both.



O speak of every kind of temptation particularly by itself, this were, you wot well, in manner an infinite thing. For under that, as I told you, fall persecutions and all. And the devil hath of his trains a thousand subtle ways, and of his open fight as many sundry poisoned darts. He tempteth us by the world, he tempteth us by our own flesh, he tempteth us by pleasure, he tempteth us by pain, he tempteth us by our foes, he tempteth us by our friends, and, under colour of kindred, he maketh many times our next friends our most foes. For as our Saviour saith, *Inimici hominis, domestici ejus*,—A man's own familiar friends are his enemies.* But in all manner of so divers temptations, one marvellous comfort is this, that with the more we be tempted, the gladder have we cause to be. For St. James saith, *Omne gaudium existimate, fratres mei, quum in tentationes varias incideritis*,—Esteem it and take it, saith he, my brethren, for a thing of all joy, when you fall into divers and sundry manner of temptations.† And no marvel; for there is in this world set up as it were a game of wrestling, wherein the people of God come in on the one side, and on the tother side come mighty strong wrestlers and wily, that is, to wit, the devils, the cursed proud damned spirits. For it is not our flesh alone that we must wrestle with, but with the devil too. *Non*

Sundry kinds
of temptation.

One marvellous
comfort in all
temptation.

This world is
a wrestling.

* Matth. x.

† Jacobi i.

est nobis colluctatio adversus carnem et sanguinem, sed adversus principes et potestates, adversus mundi rectores tenebrarum harum, contra spiritualia nequitiae in caelestibus,—Our wrestling is not here, saith St. Paul, against flesh and blood, but against the princes and potentates of these dark regions, against the spiritual ghosts of the air.* But as God (unto them that on his part give his adversary the fall) hath prepared a crown : so he that will not wrestle, shall none have. For, as St. Paul saith : *Qui certat in agone, non coronabitur, nisi qui legitime certaverit,*—There shall no man have the crown, but he that doth his devoir therefor,† according to the law of the game. And then, as holy St. Bernard saith :—How couldest thou fight or wrestle therefor, if there were no challenger against thee, that would provoke thee thereto ? And, therefore, may it be a great comfort, as St. James saith, to every man that feeleth himself challenged and provoked by temptation ; for thereby perceiveth he, that it cometh to his course to wrestle, which shall be (but if he willingly will play the coward or the fool) the matter of his eternal reward in heaven.

* Ephes. vi.

† 2 Tim. ii.

CHAPTER X.

A special Comfort in all Temptation.

UT now must this needs be to man an inestimable comfort in all temptation, if his faith fail him not, that is, to wit, that he may be sure that God is alway ready to give him strength against the devil's might, and wisdom against the devil's trains. For as the prophet saith: *Fortitudo mea et laus mea Dominus, et factus est mihi in salutem*,—My strength and my praise is our Lord; he hath been my safeguard.* And the Scripture saith: *Pete a Deo sapientiam et dabit tibi*,—Ask wisdom of God, and he shall give it thee.† *Ut possitis* (as St. Paul saith) *deprehendere omnes artes*,—That you may spy and perceive all the crafts. A great comfort may this be in all kinds of temptation, that God hath so his hand upon him that is willing to stand, and will trust in him, and call upon him, that he hath made him sure by many faithful promises in holy Scripture, that either he shall not fall, or if he sometime through faintness of faith stagger and hap to fall, yet if he call upon God betimes, his fall shall be no sore bruising to him, but as the Scripture saith: *Justus si ceciderit, non collidetur, quia Dominus supponit manum suam*,—The just man, though he fall, shall not be bruised, for our Lord holdeth under his hand.‡

God's assistance in temptation.

The prophet expresseth a plain comfortable promise

* Psal. cxvii.

† Jacobi i.

‡ Psal. xxxvi.

of God against all temptation, where he saith: *Qui habitat in adiutorio Altissimi, in protectione Dei cæli commorabitur*,—Whoso dwelleth in the help of the highest God, he shall abide in the protection or defence of the God of heaven.* Who dwelleth now, good cousin, in the help of the high God? Surely he that through a good faith abideth in the trust and confidence of God's help, and neither for lack of that faith and trust in his help falleth desperate of all help, nor departeth from the hope of his help to seek himself help (as I told you the other day) of the flesh, the world, or the devil.

He dwelleth in God's help, that chiefly seeketh all hope and help in him.

Now, he then that by fast faith and sure hope dwelleth in God's help, and hangeth always thereupon, never falling from that hope; he shall, saith the prophet, ever abide and dwell in God's defence and protection; that is to say, that while he faileth not to believe well and hope well, God will never fail in all temptation to defend him. For unto such a faithful well-hoping man the prophet in the same psalm saith farther: *Scapulis suis obumbrabit tibi, et sub pennis ejus sperabis*,—With his shoulders shall he shadow thee, and under his feathers shalt thou trust.† Lo, here hath every faithful man a sure promise, that in the fervent heat of temptation or tribulation, for (as I have said divers times before) they be in such wise coincident, that every tribulation the devil useth for temptation to bring us to impatience, and thereby to murmur, grudge, and blaspheme, and every kind of temptation is to a good man that fighteth against it, and will not follow it, a very painful tribulation. In the fervent heat, I say therefore, of every temptation, God giveth the faithful man (that hopeth in him) the shadow of his holy shoulders, which are broad and large, sufficient to refrigerate and refresh the man in that heat, and in every tribulation he putteth his shoulders for a defence between. And then what weapon of the devil may give us any deadly wound, while that impenetrable pavice of the shoulder of God standeth always between?

God's shoulders.

God's pavice.

* Psal. xc.

† Psal. xc.

Then goeth the verse farther, and saith unto such a faithful man, *et sub pennis ejus sperabis*,—thy hope shall be under his feathers; that is, to wit, for the good hope thou hast in his help, he will take thee so near him into

God is our hen
to keep us from
the kite.

his protection, that as the hen, to keep her young chickens from the kite, nestleth them together under her own wings: so fro the devil's claws, the ravenous kite of this dark air, the God of heaven will gather his faithful trusting folk near unto his own sides, and set them in surety very well and warm under the covering of his own heavenly wings. And of this defence and protection our Saviour spake himself unto the Jews (as mention is made in the Gospel of St. Matthew), to whom he said in this wise: *Hierusalem, Hierusalem, quæ occidis prophetas, et lapidas eos qui ad te missi sunt, quoties volui congregare te sicut gallina congregat pullos suos sub alas, et noluisti?*—That is to say,—

Hierusalem, Hierusalem, that killest the prophets, and stonest to death them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thee together, as the hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldest

Words of
great comfort.

not? * Here are words, cousin Vincent, words of no little comfort unto every Christian man: by which we may see, with how tender affection God of his great goodness longeth to gather under the protection of his wings, and how often like a loving hen he clocketh home unto him even those chickens of his that wilfully walk abroad in the kite's danger, and will not come at his clocking, but ever the more he clocketh for them, the farther they go from him. And, therefore, can we not doubt, if we will follow him, and with faithful hope come run unto him, but that he shall in all matter of temptation take us near unto him, and set us even under his wings, and then are we safe, if we will tarry there. For against our will can there no power pull us thence, nor hurt our souls there. *Pone me* (saith the prophet) *juxta te, et cujusvis manus pugnet contra me*,—Set me near unto thee, and fight against me whose hand that will. † And to shew the great safeguard and surety

* Matth. xxiii.

† Job xvii.

that we shall have, while we sit under his heavenly feathers, the prophet saith yet a great deal farther : *In velamento alarum tuarum exultatio*, that is, to wit, that we shall not only (when we sit by his sweet side under his holy wing) sit in safeguard ; but that we shall also under the covering of his heavenly wings, with great exultation rejoice.*

* Psal. xxi.

CHAPTER XI.

Of four kinds of Temptations, and therein both the parts of that kind of Tribulation that men willingly suffer, touched in two verses of the Psalter.



OW in the two next verses following, the prophet briefly comprehendeth four kinds of temptation, and therein all the tribulation that we shall now speak of, and also some part of that which we have spoken of before. And therefore I shall peradventure, except any farther thing fall in our way, with the treating of those two verses, finish and end all our matter. The prophet saith in the psalm: *Scuto circumdabit te veritas ejus, non timebis a timore nocturno. A sagitta volante in die, a negotio perambulante in tenebris, ab incursu et dæmonio meridiano*:—The truth of God shall compass thee about with a pavice, thou shalt not be afraid of the night's fear, nor of the arrow flying in the day, nor of the business walking about in darknesses, nor of the incursion or invasion of the devil in the mid-day.* First, cousin, in these words—The truth of God shall compass thee about with a pavice,—the prophet for the comfort of every good man in all temptation and in all tribulation, beside those other things that he said before, that the shoulders of God shall shadow them, and that also they should sit under his wing, here saith he farther,—The truth of God shall compass thee with a pavice, that is, to wit, that as God hath faithfully promised to protect and defend those that faithfully will dwell in the trust of

* Psal. xc.

his help; so will he truly perform it. And thou that such one art, will the truth of his promise defend, not with a little round buckler that scant can cover the head, but with a long large pavice that covereth all along the body, made, as holy St. Bernard saith,* broad above with the Godhead, and narrow beneath with the manhead, so that this pavice is our Saviour Christ himself. And yet is this pavice not like other pavices of this world, which are not made but in such wise as, while they defend one part, the man may be wounded upon another: but this pavice is such, that (as the prophet saith) it shall round about inclose and compass thee, so that thine enemy shall hurt thy soul on no side. For, *scuto* (saith he) *circundabit te veritas ejus*,—with a pavice shall his truth environ and compass thee round about. And then continually following, to the intent that we should see that it is not without necessity that the pavice of God should compass us about upon every side, he sheweth in what wise we be by the devil with trains and assaults, by four kinds of temptations and tribulations, environed upon every side. Against all which compass of temptations and tribulations, that round compassing pavice of God's truth, shall in such wise defend us and keep us safe, that we shall need to dread none of them all.

* Bernard, in Psal. xc.

CHAPTER XII.

The first kind of the four Temptations.

FIRST he saith: *Non timebis timore nocturno*,—Thou shalt not be afraid of the fear of the night. By the night is there in Scripture some time understood tribulation, as appeareth in the xxxivth chapter of Job: *Novit enim Deus opera eorum, idcirco inducet noctem*,—God hath known the works of them, and therefore shall he bring night upon them, that is, to wit, tribulation for their wickedness.* And well you wot, that the night is of the nature of itself very discomfortable and full of fear. And therefore by the night's fear, here I understand that tribulation by which the devil, through the sufferance of God, either by himself, or other that are his instruments, tempteth good folk to impatience, as he did Job. But he that, as the prophet saith, dwelleth and continueth faithfully in the hope of God's help, shall so be beclipped in on every side with the shield or pavise of God, that he shall have no need to be afear'd of such tribulation that is here called the night's fear.

The night's fear. And it may be also conveniently called the night's fear for two causes. The one, for that many times the cause of his tribulation is unto him that suffereth it dark and unknown; and therein varieth it and differeth from that tribulation, by which the devil tempteth a man with open fight and assault for a known good thing, from which he would withdraw him, or for

* Job xxxiv.

some known evil thing, into which he would drive him by force of such persecution. Another cause, for which it is called the night's fear, may be for that the night is so far out of courage, and naturally so casteth folk in fear, that of every thing whereof they perceive any manner dread, their phantasy doubleth their fear, and maketh them often ween that it were much worse than indeed it is. The prophet saith in the Psalter: *Posuisti tenebras et facta est nox, in ipsa pertransibunt omnes bestiae sylvæ. Catuli leonum rugientes, quærentes a Deo escam sibi*:—Thou hast, good Lord, set the darkness, and made was the night, and in the night walk all the beasts of the wood. The whelps of the lions roaring and calling unto God for their meat.*

Now, though that the lions' whelps walk about roaring in the night and seek for their prey, yet can they not get such meat as they would alway, but must hold themselves content with such as God suffereth to fall in their way. And though they be not ware thereof, yet of God they ask it, and of him they have it.

~~That lions'~~
~~whelps walk~~
~~now.~~

And this may be comfort to all good men in their night's fear, in their dark tribulation, that though they fall into the claws or the teeth of those lions' whelps, yet shall all that they can do not pass beyond the body, which is but as the garment of the soul. For the soul itself, which is the substance of the man, is so surely fenced in round about with the shield or pavice of God, that as long as he will abide faithfully in *adjutorio Altissimi* (in the hope of God's help), the lions' whelps shall not be able to hurt it. For the great lion himself could never be suffered to go farther in the tribulation of Job,† than God from time to time gave him leave. And therefore the deep darkness of the midnight maketh men that stand out of faith and out of good hope in God, to be in their tribulation far in the greater fear, for lack of the light of faith, whereby they might perceive that the uttermost of their peril is a far less thing than they take it for. But we be so wont to set so much by our

~~Comfort against~~
~~the night's fear.~~

* Psal. ciii.

† Job i.

body which we see and feel, and in the feeding and fostering whereof we set our delight and our wealth, and so little, alas ! and so seld we think on our soul, because we cannot see that but by spiritual understanding, and most specially by the eye of our faith (in the meditation whereof we bestow, God wot, little time), that the loss of our body we take for a sorer thing and for a greater tribulation a great deal than we do the loss of our soul.

And whereas our Saviour biddeth us,* that we should not fear these lions' whelps that can but kill our bodies, and when that is done, have no farther thing in their power wherewith they can do us harm, but biddeth us stand in dread of him, which when he hath slain the body, is able then beside to cast the soul into everlasting fire; we be so blind in the dark night of tribulation, for the lack of full and fast belief of God's word, that whereas in the day of prosperity we very little fear God for our soul, our night's fear of adversity maketh us very sore to fear the lion and his whelps, for dread of loss of our bodies. And whereas St. Paul in sundry places sheweth us, that our body is but as the garment of the soul; yet the faintness of our faith to the Scripture of God maketh us with the night's fear of tribulation more to dread, not only the loss of our body than of our soul: that is, to wit, of the clothing, than of the substance that is clothed therewith: but also of the very outward goods that serve for the clothing of the body. And much more foolish are we in that dark night's fear, than were he that could forget the saving of his body, for fear of losing his old rain-beaten cloak, that is but the covering of his gown or his coat.

This is great
foolishness in-
deed.

Now consider farther yet, that the prophet in the fore-remembered verses saith not, that in the night walk only the lions' whelps, but also, *omnes bestiæ sylvarum*,—all the beasts of the wood. Now wot you well, that if a man walk through the wood in the night, many things may make him afraid, which in the day he would not be afraid a whit, for in the night every bush to him that waxeth once afraid, seemeth a thief.

* Matth. x.

I remember, that when I was a young man, A proper tale.
I was once in the war with the king, then my master (God assoil his soul!) and we were camped within the Turk's ground many a mile beyond Belgrade, which would God were ours now, as well as it was then! But so happed it, that in our camp about midnight, there suddenly rose rumours and a skry that the Turk's whole army was secretly stealing upon us, wherewith our noble host was warned to arm them in haste, and set themself in array to fight. And then were scurrers of ours that brought these sudden tidings, examined more leisurely by the council, what surety or what likelihood they had perceived therein. Of whom one shewed, that by the glimmering of the moon he had espied and perceived and seen them himself, coming on softly and soberly in a long range, all in good order, not one farther forth than the other in the forefront, but as even as the thread, and in breadth farther than he could see in length. His fellows being examined said that he was somewhat pricked forth before them, and came so fast back to tell it them that they thought it rather time to make haste and give warning to the camp, than to go nearer unto them: for they were not so far off, but that they had yet themself somewhat an imperfect sight of them too. Thus stood we watching all the remnant of the night, evermore hearkening when we should hear them come, with "Hush, stand still, methink I hear a trampling;" so that at last many of us thought we heard them ourself also. But when the day was sprongen, and that we saw no man, out was our scurrer sent again, and some of our captains with him, to shew them whereabouts the place was in which he perceived them. And when they came thither they found that great fearful army of the Turks so soberly coming on, turned (God be thanked!) into a fair long hedge, standing even stone still.

And thus fareth it in the night's fear of tribulation, in which the devil to bear down and overwhelm with dread the faithful hope that we should have in God, casteth in our imagination much more fear than cause. For while there walk in the night not only the lions' whelps, but

over that, all the beasts of the wood; beside the beasts that we hear roaring in the dark night of tribulation, and fear it for a lion, we sometime find well afterward in the day, that it was no lion at all, but a seely rude roaring ass: and the thing that on the sea seemeth sometime a rock, is indeed nothing else but a mist. Howbeit, as the prophet saith: He that faithfully dwelleth in the hope of God's help, the pavice of his truth shall so fence him in round about, that be it an ass colt, or a lion's whelp, a rock of stone, or a mist, *non timebit a timore nocturno*,—the night's fear thereof shall be nothing dread to fear at all.

CHAPTER XIII.

Of Pusillanimity.

HEREFORE find I, that in this night's fear one great part thereof is the fault of Pusillanimity, that is, to wit, feeble and faint stomach, by which a man for faint heart is afraid where he needeth not; by reason whereof he fleeth oftentimes for fear of that thing of which if he fled not, he should take no harm: and some man doth sometime by *Pusillanimity.* his fleeing make his enemy bold on him which would (if he fled not, but durst abide thereby) give over and flee from him. This fault of pusillanimity maketh a man in his tribulation for feeble heart first impatient, and afterward oftentimes driveth him by impatience into a contrary affection, making him forwardly stubborn and angry against God, and thereby to fall into blasphemy, as do the damned souls in hell. This fault of pusillanimity and timorous mind letteth a man also many times from the doing of many good things, which (if he took a good stomach to him in the trust of God's help) he were well able to do: but the devil casteth him in a cowardice, and maketh him take it for humility, to think himself innocent and unable thereto, and therefore to leave the good thing undone, whereof God offereth him occasion, and had made him meet and convenient thereto.

But such folk have need to lift up their hearts and call upon God, and by the counsel of other good ghostly folk cast away the cowardice of their own conceit, which the night's fear by the devil hath framed in their phantasy,

and look in the Gospel* upon him which laid up his talent and left it unoccupied, and therefore utterly lost it, with a great reproach of his pusillanimity, by which he had weened he should have excused himself, in that he was afraid to put it forth in ure and occupy it. And all this fear cometh by the devil's drift, wherein he taketh occasion of the faintness of our good and sure trust in God. And therefore let us faithfully dwell in the good hope of his help, and then shall the pavice of his truth so compass us about, that of this night's fear we shall have no scare at all.

* Matth. xxv.

CHAPTER XIV.

Of the Daughter of Pusillanimity, a Scrupulous Conscience.



HIS pusillanimity bringeth forth by the night's fear, a very timorous daughter, a seely wretched girl, and ever puling, that is called Scrupulosity, or a scrupulous conscience. This girl is a meetly good puzzle in a house, never idle, but ever occupied and busy: but albeit she have a very gentle mistress that loveth her well, and is well content with that she doth, or if it be not all well (as all cannot be always well), content to pardon her as she doth other of her fellows, and so letteth her know that she will; yet can this peevish girl never cease whining and puling for fear lest her mistress be alway angry with her, and that she shall shrewdly be shent. Were her mistress, ween you, like to be content with this condition? Nay, verily. I knew such one myself, whose mistress was a very wise woman, and (which thing is in woman rare) very mild, and also meek, and liked very well such service as she did her in her house, but this continual discomfortable fashion of hers she so much misliked, that she would sometime say, "Eh! what aileth this girl? The elvish urchin weeneth I were a devil, I trow. Surely if she did me ten times better service than she doth, yet with this fantastical fear of hers I would be loth to have her in my house."

Scrupulosity.

A proper tale.

Thus fareth, lo! the scrupulous person, which frameth himself many times double the fear that he hath cause, and many times a great fear where there is no cause at

all, and of that which is indeed no sin, maketh a venial, and that that is venial, imagineth to be deadly. And yet for all that falleth in them, being namely such of their own nature as no man long liveth without, and then he feareth that he be never full confessed, nor never full contrite, and then that his sins be never full forgiven

The common manner of scrupulous persons. him; and then he confesseth, and confesseth again, and cumbereth himself and his confessor both; and then every prayer that he saith, though he say it as well as the frail infirmity of the man will suffice, yet is he not satisfied, but if he say it again, and yet after that again. And when he hath said one thing thrice, as little is he satisfied with the last, as with the first; and then is his heart evermore in heaviness, unquiet, and in fear, full of doubt and dullness, without comfort or spiritual consolation.

With this night's fear the devil sore troubleth the mind of many a right good man, and that doth he, to bring him to some great inconvenience: for he will, if he can, drive him so much to the fearful minding of God's rigorous justice, that he will keep him from the comfortable remembrance of God's great mighty mercy, and so make him do all his good works wearily, and without consolation and quickness.

Moreover, he maketh him take for sin something that is none, and for deadly, some such as are but venial, to the intent that, when he shall fall in them, he shall by reason of his scruple sin, where else he should not, or sin deadly (while his conscience in the deed doing so gave him), whereas else indeed he has but offended venially. Yea, and farther, the devil longeth to make all his good works and spiritual exercise so painful and so tedious unto him, that with some other subtle suggestion or false wily doctrine of a false spiritual liberty, he should for the false ease and pleasure that he should suddenly find therein, be easily conveyed from that evil fault into a much worse, and have his conscience as wide and as large after, as ever it was narrow and strait before. For better is yet of truth a conscience a little too strait, than a little too large. My mother had, when I was a little boy, a

good old woman that took heed to her children, they called her Mother Maud: I trow, you have heard of her.

VINCENT.—Yea, yea, very much.

ANTONY.—She was wont, when she sat by the fire with us, to tell us that were children ^{Mother Maud's} many childish tales. But as Plinius saith, that there is no book lightly so bad, but that some good thing a man may pick out thereof;* so think I there is no tale so foolish, but that yet in one matter or other, to some purpose it may hap to serve. For I remember me that among other of her fond childish tales, she told us once, that the ass and the wolf came on a time to confession to the fox. The poor ass came to shrift in the Shrovetide, a day or two before Ash Wednesday; but the wolf would not come to confession until he saw first Palm Sunday past, and then foded yet forth farther until Good Friday came. The fox asked the ass before he began *Benedicite*, wherefore he came to confession so soon before Lent began. The poor beast answered him again; for fear of deadly sin, and for fear he should lose his part of any of those prayers that the priest in the cleansing days prayeth for them that are confessed already. There in his shrift he had a marvellous great grudge in his inward conscience, that he had one day given his master a cause of anger, in that that with his rude roaring before his master arose, he had awaked him out of his sleep, and bereaved him out of his rest. The fox for that fault, like a good discreet confessor, charged him to do so no more, but lie still and sleep like a good son himself, till his master were up and ready to go to work, and so should he be sure, that he should not wake him no more.

To tell you all the poor ass's confession, it were a long work, for every thing that he did was deadly sin with him, the poor soul was so scrupulous. But his wise wily confessor accounted them for trifles, as they were indeed, and sware afterward unto the bageard, that he was so weary to sit so long and hear him, that saving for the

* Lib. iii. epist. 5.

manners' sake, he had lever have sitten all the while at breakfast with a good fat goose. But when it came to the penance giving, the fox found that the most weighty sin in all his shrift was gluttony, and therefore he discreetly gave him in penance, that he should never for greediness of his own meat do any other beast any harm or hinderance, and then eat his meat, and study for no more.

Now, as good Mother Maud told us, when the wolf came to confession to Father Reynard (for that was, she said, the fox's name) upon Good Friday, his confessor shook his great pair of beads upon him almost as big as bowls, and asked him wherefore he came so late? "Forsooth, Father Reynard," quoth the wolf, "I must needs tell you the truth: I come (you wot well) therefor, I durst come no sooner, for fear lest you would for my

Such ghostly
fathers made
the preparation
to schism and
heresy.

gluttony have given me in penance to fast some part of this Lent." "Nay, nay," quoth Father Fox, "I am not so unreasonable: for

I fast none of it myself. For I may say to thee, son, between us twain here in confession, it is no commandment of God this fasting, but an invention of man. The priests make folk fast and put them to pain about the moonshine in the water, and do but make folk fools: but they shall make me no such fool, I warrant thee, son. For I eat flesh all this Lent, myself I. Howbeit, indeed, because I will not be occasion of slander, I therefore eat it secretly in my chamber, out of sight of all such foolish brethren as for their weak scrupulous conscience would wax offended withal, and so would I counsel you to do." "Forsooth, Father Fox," quoth the wolf, "and so I thank God I do, so near as I can. For when I go to my meat, I take none other company with me, but such sure brethren as are of mine own nature, whose consciences are not weak, I warrant you, but their stomachs as strong as mine." "Well then, no force," quoth Father Fox.

Such sure wolf-
ish brethren
began all fleshly
liberty.

But when he heard after by his confession, that he was so great a ravener, that he devoured and spent sometime so much victual

at one meal, as the price thereof would well find some poor man with his wife and children almost all the week ; then he prudently reprov'd that point in him, and preach'd him a process of his own temperance, which never used, as he said, to pass upon himself the value of sixpence at a meal, no nor yet so much neither. " For when I bring home a goose," quoth he, " not out of the poulter's shop, where folk find them out of their feathers ready plucked, and see which is the fullest and yet for sixpence buy and choose the best, but out of the housewife's house at the first hand, which may somewhat better cheap afford them, you wot well, than the poulter may, nor yet cannot be suffered to see them plucked, and stand and choose them by day, but am fain by night to take at adventure, and when I come home, am fain to do the labour to pluck her myself: yet for all this, though it be but lean, and I ween not well worth a groat, serveth it me somewhat, for all that, both dinner and supper too. And therefore, as for that you live of raven, therein can I find no fault: you have used it so long, that I think you can do none other. And therefore were it folly to forbid it you, and (to say the truth) against good conscience too.

*steeet counsel
for a wolfish
conscience.*

For live you must, I wot well, and other craft can you none; and therefore, as reason is, must you live by that. But yet, you wot well, too much is too much, and measure is a merry mean, which I perceive by your shrift you have never used to keep. And therefore, surely, this shall be your penance: that you shall all this year now pass upon yourself the price of sixpence at a meal, as near as your conscience can guess the price."

Their shrift have I shewed you, as Mother Maud shewed it to us. But now serveth for our matter the conscience of them both, in the true performing of their penance. The poor ass after his shrift, when he waxed anhungered, saw a sow lie with her pigs well lapped in new straw, and near he drew and thought to have eaten of the straw. But such his scrupulous conscience began therein to grudge him. For while his penance was, that for greediness of his meat he should do none other body harm; he

thought he might not eat one straw thereof, lest for lack of that straw some of those pigs might hap to die for cold. So held he still his hunger, till one brought him meat. But when he should fall thereto, then fell he yet in a far farther scruple; for then it came in his mind that he should yet break his penance, if he should eat any of that either, sith he was commanded by his ghostly father, that he should not for his own meat hinder any other beast. For he thought, that if he eat not that meat, some other beast might hap to have it, and so should he by the eating of it peradventure hinder some other. And thus stood he still fasting, till when he told the cause, his ghostly father came and informed him better, and then he cast off that scruple, and fell mannerly to his meat, and was a right honest ass many a fair day after.

The wolf now coming from shrift clean soiled from his sins, went about to do, as a shrewd wife once told her husband that she would do, when she came from shrift. “Be merry, man,” quoth she, “now;
A merry jest. for this day I thank God, was I well shriven, and purpose now therefore to leave off all mine old shrewdness and begin afresh.”

VINCENT.—Ah, well, uncle, can you report her so? That word heard I her speak, but she said it in sport to make her good man laugh.

ANTONY.—Indeed it seemed she spake it half in sport. For, that she said she would cast away all her shrewdness, therein I trow she sported; but in that she said she would begin it all afresh, her husband found that good earnest.

VINCENT.—Well, I shall shew her what you say, I warrant you.

ANTONY.—Then will you make me make my word good; but whatsoever she did, at the least wise so fared now this wolf, which had cast out in confession all his old raven, and then hunger pricked him forward, that (as the shrewd wife said) he did indeed begin all afresh. But yet the prick of conscience withdrew and held him back, because he would not for breaking of his penance,

take any prey for his mealtide that should pass the price of sixpence. It happed him then as he walked prowling for his gear about, he came where a man had in few days before cast off two old, lean, and lame horses, so sick, that no flesh was there almost left on them, and the one, when the wolf came by, could scant stand upon his legs, and the other already dead, and his skin ripped off and carried away. And as he looked upon them, suddenly he was first about to feed upon them, and whet his teeth on their bones. But as he looked aside, he spied a fair cow in a close walking with her young calf by her side. And as soon as he saw them, his conscience began to grudge him against both these two horses. And then he sighed, and said unto himself: "Alas! wicked wretch that I am, I had almost broken my penance ere I was ware. For yonder dead horse, because I never saw no dead horse sold in the market, and I should even die therefor, by the way that my sinful soul shall to, I cannot devise what price I should set upon him, but in my conscience I set him far above sixpence, and therefore, I dare not meddle with him. Now, then, is yonder quick horse of likelihood worth a great deal of money: for horses be dear in this country, specially such soft amblers; for I see by his face he trotteth not, nor can scant shift a foot. And therefore, I may not meddle with him, for he very far passeth my sixpence. But kine this country here hath enough, but money have they very little; and therefore, considering the plenty of the kine, and the scarcity of the money, as for yonder peevish cow seemeth unto me in my conscience worth not past a groat, an she be worth so much. Now, then, as for her calf, is not so much as she by half. And therefore, while the cow is in my conscience worth but fourpence, my conscience cannot serve me for sin of my soul to praise her calf above twopence, and so pass they not sixpence between them both. And therefore, them twain may I well eat at this one meal, and break not my penance at all." And therefore, so he did, without any scruple of conscience.

If such beasts could speak now, as Mother Maud said

they could then, some of them would, I ween, tell a tale almost as wise as this. Wherein save for the minishing of old Mother Maud's tale, else would a shorter process have served: but yet as peevish as the parable is, in this it serveth for our purpose, that the night's fear of a conscience somewhat scrupulous, though it be painful and troublous to him that hath it, like as this poor ass had here, is less harm yet, than a conscience over large, or such as for his own fantasy the man list to frame himself, now drawing it narrow, now stretching it in breadth,

A cheverel conscience.

after the manner of a cheverel point, to serve on every side for his own commodity, as did here the wily wolf. But such folk are out of tribulation, and comfort need they none, and therefore are they out of our matter. But those that are in the night's fear of their own scrupulous conscience, let them be well ware, as I said, that the devil, for weariness of the one, draw them not into the other; and while he would flee from Scylla, drive him into Charybdis. He must do as doth a ship

A good similitude.

that should come into an haven, in the mouth whereof lie secret rocks under the water on both sides. If he by mishap entered in among them that are on the one side, and cannot tell how to get out: he must get a substantial, cunning pilot that so can conduct him from the rocks on that side, that yet he bring him not into those that are on the other side, but can guide him in the midway.

Counsel for a scrupulous conscience.

Let them, I say therefore, that are in the troublous fear of their own scrupulous conscience, submit the rule of their conscience to the counsel of some other good man, which, after the variety and the nature of the scruples, may temper his advice. Yea, although a man be very well learned himself, yet let him in this case learn the custom used among physicians. For be one of them never so cunning, yet in his own disease and sickness he never useth to trust all

An example of physicians.

to himself, but sendeth for such of his fellows as he knoweth meet, and putteth himself in their hands for many considerations, whereof they assign the causes, and one of the causes is fear, whereof upon

some tokens he may conceive in his own passion a great deal more than needeth; and then were it good for his health, that for the time he knew no such thing at all. I knew once in this town one of the most cunning men in that faculty, and the best expert, and therewith the most famous too, and he that the greatest cures did upon other men, and yet when he was himself once very sore sick, I heard his fellows that then looked unto him, of all which every one would in their own disease, have used his help before any other man, wish yet that for the time of his own sickness, being so sore as it was, he had known no physic at all, he took so great heed unto every suspicious token, and feared so far the worst, that his fear did him sometime much more harm, than the sickness gave him cause.

And therefore, as I say, whoso hath such a trouble of his scrupulous conscience, let him for a while forbear the judgment of himself, and follow the counsel of some other, whom he knoweth for well learned and virtuous, and specially in the place of confession (for there is God specially present with his grace, assisting his holy sacrament), and let him not doubt to acquiet his mind, and follow that he there is bidden, and think for a while less of the fear of God's justice, and be more merry in the remembrance of his mercy, and persevere in prayer for grace, and abide and dwell faithfully in the sure hope of his help. And then shall he find without any doubt, that the pavice of God's truth shall, as the prophet saith, so compass him about, that he shall not need to dread this night's fear of scrupulosity, but shall have afterward his conscience stablished in good quiet and rest.

CHAPTER XV.

Another kind of the night's fear, another daughter of Pusillanimity, that is, to wit, the horrible temptation, by which some folk are tempted to kill and destroy themselves.



VINCENT.—VERILY, good uncle, you have in my mind, well declared these kinds of the night's fear.

ANTONY.—Surely, cousin, but yet are there many more than I can either remember, or find: howbeit, one yet cometh to my mind now, of which I before nothing thought, and which is yet, in mine opinion, of all other fears the most horrible: that is, to wit, cousin, where the devil tempteth a man to kill and destroy himself.

The most horrible fear and secret temptation.

VINCENT.—Undoubtedly this kind of tribulation is marvellous and strange, and the temptation is of such a sort, that some men have opinion, that such as fall once in that fantasy, can never after full cast it off.

ANTONY.—Yes, yes, cousin, many a hundred, or else God forbid! But the thing that maketh men so say, is because that of those which finally do destroy themselves, there is much speech and much wondering, as it is well worthy: but many a good man, and many a good woman, hath sometime, yea divers years each after other, continually been tempted thereto, and yet have by grace and good counsel, well and virtuously withstanden it, and been in conclusion clearly delivered of it, and their tribulation nothing known abroad, and therefore nothing

talked of. But surely, cousin, an horrible sore trouble it is to any man or woman that the devil tempteth therewith. Many have I heard of, and with some have I talked myself, that have been sore encumbered with that temptation, and marked have I not a little the manner of them.

VINCENT.—I require you, good uncle, shew me somewhat of such things as you perceive therein. For first, where you call this kind of temptation the daughter of Pusillanimity, and thereby so near of kin to the night's fear: methinketh, on the other side, that it is rather a thing that cometh of a great courage and boldness, when they dare their own hands put themselves to death, from which we see almost every man shrink and flee, and that many such, as we know by good proof and plain experience for men of great heart and of an exceeding hardy courage.

ANTONY.—I said, cousin Vincent, that of pusillanimity causeth this temptation, and very truth it is that indeed it so doth. But yet I meant it not, that of only faint heart and fear it cometh and groweth alway. For the devil tempteth sundry folks by sundry ways. But the cause wherefore I spake of none other kind of that temptation, than of only that which is the daughter that the devil begetteth upon Pusillanimity, was for that, that those other kinds of that temptation fall not under the nature of tribulation and fear, and therefore fall they far out of our matter here, and are such temptations as only need counsel, and not comfort or consolation, for that the persons therewith tempted be with that kind of temptation not troubled in their mind, but verily well content, both in the tempting and following. For some have there been, cousin, such, that they have been tempted thereto by mean of a foolish pride, and some by the mean of anger, without any dread at all, and very glad to go thereto: to this I say not nay. But whereas you ween, that none fall thereto by fear, but that they have all a strong mighty stomach: that shall you well see the contrary, and that peradventure in those of whom you would ween the stomach most strong, and their heart and courage most hardy.

What pride
and anger
worketh some-
time.

VINCENT.—Yet is it marvel, uncle, to me, that it should be as you say it is, that this temptation is unto them that do it for pride or for anger no tribulation, nor that they should need, in so great a distress and peril both of body and soul to be lost, no manner of good ghostly comfort at all.

ANTONY.—Let us therefore, cousin, consider a sample or two, for thereby shall we the better perceive it. There was here in Buda, in king Ladislaus' days, a good, poor, The carpenter's wife. honest man's wife: this woman was so fiendish, that the devil perceiving her nature, put her in the mind that she should anger her husband so sore, that she might give him occasion to kill her, and then he should be hanged for her.

VINCENT.—This was a strange temptation indeed. What the devil should she be the better then?

ANTONY.—Nothing, but that it eased her shrewd stomach before, to think that her husband should be hanged after. And peradventure if you look about the world and consider it well, you shall find more such stomachs than a few. Have you never heard no furious body plainly say, that to see some such man have a mischief, he would with good will be content to lie as long in hell as God liveth in heaven?

VINCENT.—Forsooth, and some such have I heard of.

ANTONY.—This mind of his was not much less mad than hers, but rather haply the more mad of the twain: for the woman peradventure did not cast so far peril therein. But to tell you now to what good pass her charitable purpose came: as her husband (the man was a carpenter) stood hewing with his chip-axe upon a piece of timber, she began after her old guise so to revile him, that the man waxed wrath at last, and bade her get in or he would lay the helve of his axe about her back, and said also, that it were little sin even with that axe-head to chop off that unhappy head of hers that carried such an ungracious tongue therein. At that word the devil took his time, and whetted her tongue against her teeth, and when it was well sharpened, she sware unto him in very fierce anger: "By the mass, whoreson husband, I would

thou wouldst: here lieth my head, lo! (and therewith down she laid her head upon the same timber log) if thou smite it not off, I beshrew thy whoreson heart." With that, likewise, as the devil stood at her elbow, so stood (as I heard say) his good angel at his, and gave him ghostly courage, and bade him be bold and do it. And so the good man up with his chip-axe, and at a chop chopped off her head indeed. There were standing other folk by, which had a good sport to hear her chide, but little they looked for this chance, till it was done ere they could let it. They said they heard her tongue babble in her head, and call whoreson, whoreson, twice after the head was from the body. At the leastwise afterward unto the king thus they reported all, except only one, and that was a woman, and she said that she heard it not.

VINCENT.—Forsooth, this was a wonderful work. What became, uncle, of the man?

ANTONY.—The king gave him his pardon.

VINCENT.—Verily he might in conscience do no less.

ANTONY.—But then was it farther almost at another point, that there should have been a statute made, that in such case there should never after pardon be granted, but the truth being able to be proved, no husband should need any pardon, but should have leave by the law to follow the sample of the carpenter, and do the same.

VINCENT.—How happed it, uncle, that the good law was left unmade?

ANTONY.—How happed it? As it happeth, cousin, that many more be left unmade as well as it, and within a little as good as it too, both here, and in other countries, and sometime some worse made in their stead.

But (as they say) the let of that law was the Note.
queen's grace, God forgive her soul! it was the greatest thing, I ween, good lady, that she had to answer for when she died. For surely, save for that one thing, she was a full blessed woman. But letting now that law pass, this temptation in procuring her own death was unto this carpenter's wife no tribulation at all, as far as ever men could perceive: for it liked her well to think thereon, and she even longed therefor. And therefore, if she had before

told you or me her mind, and that she would so fain bring it so to pass, we could have had no occasion to comfort her as one that were in tribulation : but marry, counsel her (as I told you before) we well might, to refrain and amend that malicious devilish mind of hers.

VINCENT.—Verily that is truth ; but such as are well willing to do any purpose that is so shameful, will never tell their mind to nobody for very shame.

ANTONY.—Some will not indeed, and yet are there some again, that be their intent never so shameful, find some yet whom their heart serveth them to make of their counsel therein. Some of my folk here can
 Another strange case. tell you, that no longer than even yesterday, one that came out of Vienna shewed us among other talking, that a rich widow (but I forgot to ask him where it happed) having all her life an high proud mind and a fell, as those two virtues are wont alway to keep company together, was at debate with another neighbour of hers in the town, and on a time she made of her counsel a poor neighbour of hers, whom she thought for money she might induce to follow her mind. With him secretly she brake, and offered him ten ducats for his labour, to do so much for her as in a morning early to come to her house, and with an axe unknown privily to strike off her head. And when he had so done, then convey the bloody axe into the house of him with whom she was at debate, in some such manner wise as it might be thought that he had murdered her of malice, and then she thought she should be taken for a martyr. And yet had she further devised, that another sum of money should after be sent to Rome, and that there should be means made to the Pope, that she might in all haste be canonized. This poor man promised, but intended not to perform it. Howbeit, when he deferred it, she provided the axe herself, and he appointed with her the morning when he should come and do it. But then set he such other folk, as he would should know her frantic phantasy, in such place appointed as they might well hear her and him talk together. And after that he had talked with her thereof what he would, so much as he thought was enough, he

made her lie down, and took up the axe in his one hand, and with the tother hand he felt the edge, and found a fault that it was not sharp, and that, therefore, he would in no wise do it, till that he had ground it sharper; he could not else (he said) for pity, it would put her to so much pain: and so full sore against her will for that time she kept her head still. But because she would not suffer any more to deceive her so and fode her forth with delays, ere it was very long after she hanged herself with her own hands.

VINCENT.—Forsooth, here was a tragical story, whereof I never heard the like.

ANTONY.—Forsooth, the party that told it me, sware that he knew it for a truth. And himself is, I promise you, such as I reckon for right honest, and of substantial truth. Now, here she letted not, as shameful a mind as she had, to make one of her counsel yet: and as I remember, another too, whom she trusted with the money that should procure her canonization. And here, I wot well, that her temptation came not of fear, but of high malice and pride. But then was she so glad in the pleasant device thereof, that (as I shewed you) she took it for no tribulation. And therefore, comforting of her could have no place: but if men should any thing give her toward her help, it must have been (as I told you) good counsel. And therefore, as I said, this kind of temptation to a man's own destruction, which requireth counsel and is out of tribulation, was out of our matter, that is to treat of comfort in tribulation.

CHAPTER XVI.

Of him that were moved to kill himself by illusion of the devil, which he reckoned for a revelation.



UT lest you might reject both these samples, weening they were but feigned tales, I shall put you but in remembrance of one, which I reckon yourself have read in the Collations of Cassianus.* And if you have not, there may you soon find it: for myself have half forgotten the thing, it is so long since I read it. But this much I remember, that he telleth there of one that was many days a very holy man in his living, and among the other virtuous monks and ankers that lived there in wilderness was marvellously much esteemed, saving that some were not all out of fear of him, lest his revelations, whereof he told many by himself, would prove illusions of the devil: and so proved it after indeed. For the man was by the devil's subtle suggestions brought into such an high spiritual pride, that in conclusion the devil brought him to that horrible point, that he made him to kill himself, and as far as my mind giveth me now without new sight of the book, he brought him to it by this persuasion, that he made him believe, that it was God's will he should so do, and that thereby should he go straight to heaven. And then if it were by that persuasion, with which he took very great comfort in his own mind himself, then was it (as I said) out of our case here, and needed not comfort, but counsel against giving credence to the devil's persuasion.

* Collat. 2, cap. 5.

But marry, if he made him first perceive, how he had been deluded, and then tempted him to his own death by shame and despair, then was it within our matter, lo. For then was his temptation fallen down from pride to pusillanimity, and was waxen that kind of the night's fear that I spake of, wherein a good part of the counsel that were to be given him, should have need to stand in good comforting; for then was he brought into right sure tribulation.

But as I was about to tell you, strength of heart and courage is there none therein, not only for that very strength, as it hath the name of virtue in a reasonable creature, can never be without prudence; but also for that, as I said, even in them that seem men of most hardiness, it shall well appear to them that well weigh the matter, that the mind, whereby they be led to destroy themselves, groweth out of pusillanimity and very foolish fear. Take for example, Cato Uticensis, who ^{Cato Atticensis.} in Africa killed himself after the great victory that Julius Cæsar had. St. Austin well declareth in his work *De Civitate Dei*,* that there was no strength nor magnanimity therein, but plain pusillanimity and impotency of stomach, whereby he was forced to the destruction of himself, because his heart was too feeble to bear the beholding of another man's glory, or the suffering of other calamities, that he feared should fall on himself. So that (as St. Austin well proveth) that humble deed is no act of strength, but an act of the mind either drawn from the consideration of itself with some devilish phantasy, wherein the man hath need to be called home with good counsel, or else oppressed by faint heart and fear, wherein a good part of the counsel must stand in lifting up his courage with good consolation and comfort.

And therefore, if we found any such religious person, as was that father which Cassian writeth of, that were of such austere and apparently ghostly living, that he were with such, as well knew him, reputed for a man of singular virtue, and that it were perceived, that he had many strange visions appearing unto him: if it should

* Lib. i. cap. 22 et 23.

now be perceived after that, that the man went about secretly to destroy himself, who so should hap to come to the knowledge thereof, and intended to do his devoir in the let: first must he find the means to search and find out, whether the man be in his manner and in his countenance, lightsome, glad, and joyful, or dumpish, heavy, and sad: whether he go thereabout, as one that were full of the glad hope of heaven, or as one that had his breast farced full of tediousness and weariness of the world. If he were founden of the first fashion, it were a token that the devil hath by his fantastical apparitions puffed him up in such a peevish pride, that he hath finally persuaded him by some illusion shewed him for the proof, that God's pleasure is that he shall for his sake with his own hands kill himself.

VINCENT.—What if a man so found it, uncle? What counsel should a man give him then?

ANTONY.—That were somewhat out of our purpose, cousin: sith, as I told you before, the man were not then in sorrow and tribulation, whereof our matter speaketh, but in a perilous merry mortal temptation. So that if we should beside our own matter that we have in hand, enter into that too, we might hap to make a longer work between both, than we could well finish this day. Howbeit, to be short, it is soon seen, that therein the sum and effect of the counsel must in manner rest in giving him warning of the devil's sleights, and that must be done under such sweet, pleasant manner, as the man should not abhor to hear it. For while it could lightly be none other, but that the man were rocked and sung asleep by the devil's craft, and thereby his mind occupied as it were in a delectable dream, he should never have good audience of him, that would rudely and boisterously shog him and wake him, and so shake him out thereof. Therefore, must you fair and easily touch him, and with some pleasant speech awake him so, that he wax not wayward, as children do that are waked ere they list to rise. But when a man hath first begun with his praise (for if he be proud, ye shall much better please him with a commendation than with a Dirige), then after favour

won therewithal, a man may little and little insinuate the doubt of such revelations, not at the first as it were for any doubt of his, but of some other that men in some other places talk of. And peradventure it shall not miscontent himself, to shew great perils that may fall therein in another man's case (rather than his own) and shall begin to preach upon it.

Or if you were a man that had not so very a scrupulous conscience of an harmless lie devised to do good withal, which kind St. Austin, though he take alway for sin, yet he taketh it but for venial, and St. Hierome* (as by divers places in his books appeareth) taketh not fully for so much: then may you feign some secret friend of yours to be in such case, and that yourself somewhat fear his peril, and have made of charity this voyage for his sake to ask this good father's counsel. And in that communication may you bring in these words of St. John: *Nolite omni spiritui credere, sed probate spiritus si ex Deo sunt*,—Give not credence unto every spirit, but prove the spirits whether they be of God:† and these words of St. Paul: *Angelus Sathanæ transfiguratur se in angelum lucis*,—The angel of Sathan transfigureth himself into the angel of light.‡ You shall take occasion the better, if they hap to come in on his own side, but yet not lack occasion neither, if those texts (for lack of his offer) come in upon your own; occasion, I say, shall you not lack to inquire, by what sure and undeceivable tokens a man may discern the true revelations from the false illusions, whereof a man shall find many both here and there in divers other authors, and whole together diverse goodly treatises of that good godly doctor, M. John Gerson, entitled, *De Probatione Spirituum*. As, if the party be natural wise, or any thing seem fantastical; or whether the party be poor-spirited, or proud, which will somewhat appear by his delight in his own praise: or if of wiliness, or of another pride for to be praised of humility, he refuse to hear thereof yet: any little fault found in himself, or diffidence declared, and mistrust of his own revelations, and doubtful tokens told, whereof

* Ad Consent. de Mendac.

† 1 Joan. iv.

‡ 2 Cor. xi.

himself should fear lest they be the devil's illusions: such things (as M. Gerson saith) will make him to spit out somewhat of his spiteful spirit, if the devil lie in his breast.

Or if the devil be yet so subtle, that he keep himself close in his warm den, and blow out never a hot word, yet is it to be considered, what end his revelations draw to, whether to any spiritual profit to himself or other folk, or only to vain marvels and wonders. Also, whether they withdraw him from such other good, virtuous business, as by the common rules of Christendom, or any rules of his profession, he was wont to use, or was bound to be occupied in. Or whether he fall into any singularity of opinions against the Scripture of God, or against the common faith of Christ's Catholic Church. Many other tokens are there in that work of M. Gerson spoken of, to consider by, whether the person neither having revelations of God, nor illusions from the devil, do either for winning of money, or worldly favour, feign his revelations himself to delude the people withal.

But now for our purpose, if among any of the marks, by which the true revelations may be known from the false illusions, that man himself bring forth for one mark the doing or teaching of any thing against the Scripture of God, or the common faith of the church; then have you an entry made you, by which when you list you may enter into the special matter, wherein he can never well flit from you. Or else may you yet, if you list, feign that your secret friend, for whose sake you come to him for counsel, is brought into that mind by a certain apparition shewed unto him (as himself saith) by an angel; as you fear, by the devil; that he can be by you none otherwise persuaded as yet, but that the pleasure of God is, that he shall go kill himself: and that if he so do, then shall he be thereby so specially participant of Christ's passion, that he shall forthwith be carried up with angels into heaven. For which he is so joyful, that he firmly purposeth upon it, no less glad to do it, than another man would be glad to void it. And therefore may you desire his good

counsel, to instruct you with some good substantial advice, wherewith you may turn him from his error, that he be not (under hope of God's true revelation) in body and soul destroyed by the devil's false illusion. If he will in this thing study and labour to instruct you, the things that himself shall find out of his own invention, though they be less effectual, shall peradventure more work with himself toward his own amendment, sith he shall of likelihood better like them, than shall double so substantial things told by another man. If he be loth to think upon that side, and therefore shrink from the matter; then is there none other way, but adventure after the plain fashion to fall into the matter and shew what you hear, and to give him counsel and exhortation to the contrary; but if you list to say, that thus and thus hath the matter been reasoned already between your friend and you, and therein may you rehearse such things, as should prove that the vision which moveth him is no true revelation, but a very false illusion.

VINCENT.—Verily, uncle, I well allow this, that a man should as well in this thing, as every other wherein he longeth to do another man good, seek such a pleasant way as the party should be likely to like, or at the leastwise to take well in worth his communication: and not so to enter in thereunto, as he, whom he would help, should abhor him and be loth to hear him, and therefore take no profit by him. But now, uncle, if it come by the one way or the other, to the point that hear me he will, or shall; what be the reasons effectual with which I should by counsel convert him?

ANTONY.—All those, by which you may make him perceive that himself is deceived, and that his visions be no Godly revelations, but very devilish illusions. And those reasons must you gather of the man, of the matter, and of the law of God, or of some one of these.

1. Of the man: if you can peradventure shew him, that in such a point or such, he is waxen worse since such revelations have haunted him than he was before, as in those that are deluded, whoso be well acquainted with them shall well mark and perceive. For they wax

more proud, more wayward, more envious, suspicious, ^{evident tokens} misjudging, and depraving other men, with ^{of illusions.} the delight of their own praise, and such other spiritual vices of the soul.

2. Of the matter may you gather, if it have happed his revelations before to prove false, or that they be things rather strange than profitable. For that is a good mark between God's miracles and the ^{God's miracles.} devil's wonders. For Christ and his saints ^{The devil's} have their miracles alway tending to fruit and profit: the devil, and his witches, and necromancers, all their wonderful works draw to no fruitful end, but to a fruitless ostentation and show, as it were a juggler that would, for a show before the people, play masteries at a feast.

3. Of the law of God you must draw your reasons, in shewing by the Scripture that the thing which he weeneth God by his angel biddeth, God hath his own mouth forbidden.* And that is, you wot well, in the case that we speak of, so easy to find, that I need not to rehearse it unto you, sith there is plain among the Ten Commandments forbidden the unlawful killing of any man: and therefore of himself, as St. Austin saith, and all the Church teacheth, except himself be no man.†

VINCENT.—This is very true, good uncle, nor I will not dispute upon any glosing of that prohibition. But sith we find not the contrary, but that God may dispense with that commandment himself, and both license and command also, if himself list, any man to go kill either another man or himself either: this man that is now by such a marvellous vision induced to believe that God so biddeth him, and therefore thinketh himself in that case of that prohibition discharged, and charged with the contrary commandment; with what reason may we make him perceive that his vision is but an illusion, and not a true revelation?

ANTONY.—Nay, cousin Vincent, you shall not need in this case to require those reasons of me: but taking the Scripture of God for a ground in this matter, you know

* Deut. v.

† August. de Civitat. Dei, lib. i. cap. 26.

very well yourself, you shall go somewhat a shorter way to work, if you ask this question of him, that sith God hath forbidden the thing once himself, though he may dispense therewith if he will, yet sith the devil may feign himself God, and with a marvellous vision delude one, and make as though God did it, and sith the devil also is more likely to speak against God's commandment than God against his own; you shall have good cause, I say, to demand of the man himself, whereby he knoweth that his vision is God's true revelation, and not the devil's false delusion.

VINCENT.—Indeed, uncle, I think, that would be an hard question for him. May a man have, uncle, in such a thing even a very sure knowledge in his own mind?

ANTONY.—Yea, cousin, God may cast into the mind of a man, I suppose, such an inward light and understanding that he cannot fail but be sure thereof. And yet he that is deluded by the devil may think himself as sure, and yet be deceived indeed. And such a difference is there in a manner between them, as The similitude of dreaming and waking. is between the sight of a thing while we be waking and look thereon, and the sight with which we see a thing in our sleep, while we dream thereof.

VINCENT.—This is a pretty similitude, uncle, in this thing; and then is it easy for the monk that we speak of, to declare how he knoweth his vision for a true revelation and not a false delusion, if there be so great difference between them.

ANTONY.—Not so easy, cousin, yet, as you ween it were. For how can you now prove unto me that you be awake?

VINCENT.—Marry lo: do I not now wag my hand, shake my head, and stamp with my feet here in the floor?

ANTONY.—Have you never dreamed ere this, that you have done the same?

VINCENT.—Yes, that have I, and more too than that. For I have ere this in my sleep dreamed that I doubted whether I were awake or asleep, and have in good faith thought that I did thereupon even the same things that

I do now indeed, and thereby determined that I was not asleep. And yet have I dreamed in good faith farther, that I have been afterward at dinner, and there making merry with company, have told the same dream at the table and laughed well thereat, that (while I was asleep) I had by such means of moving the parts of my body, and considering thereof, so verily though myself waking.

ANTONY.—And will you not now as soon, trow you, when you wake and rise, laugh as well at yourself, when you see that you lie now in your warm bed asleep again and dream all this time, while you ween so verily that you be waking and talking of these matters with me?

VINCENT.—God's Lord, uncle, you go now merrily to work with me indeed, when you look and speak so sadly, and would make me ween I were asleep.

ANTONY.—It may be that you be so, for any thing that you can say or do, whereby you may with any reason that you can make drive me to confess, that yourself be sure of the contrary: sith you can do nor say nothing now, whereby you be sure to be waking, but that you have ere this, or hereafter may, think yourself so surely to do the selfsame things indeed, while you be all the while asleep, and nothing do but lie dreaming.

VINCENT.—Well, well, uncle, though I have ere this thought myself awake, while I was indeed asleep: yet for all this I know well enough that I am awake now, and so do you too, though I cannot find the words by which I may with reason enforce you to confess it, but that alway you may drive me off by the sample of my dream.

ANTONY.—This is, cousin, as me seemeth very true. And likewise seemeth me the manner and difference between some kinds of true revelations, and some kind of false illusions, as it standeth between the things that are done waking, and the things that in our dreams seem to be done while we be sleeping: that is, to wit, that he which hath that kind of revelation from God is as sure of the truth, as we be of our own deed while we be waking. And he that is illuded by the devil, is

Mark well this comparison of waking and dreaming, and apply the same as well to true Catholic doctrine, and to false opinions and heresies.

in such wise deceived, and worse too, than be they by their dream, and yet reckoneth himself as sure for the time as the other, saving that the one falsely weeneth and the other truly knoweth. But I say not, cousin, that this kind of sure knowledge cometh in every kind of revelation. For there are many kinds, whereof were too long to talk now: but I say that God doth, or may do, to man in some thing certainly send some such.

VINCENT.—Yet then may this religious man, of whom we speak, when I shew him the Scripture against his revelation (and therefore call it an illusion), bid me with reason go care for myself. For he knoweth well and surely himself, that his revelation is good and true, and not any false illusion, sith for all the general commandment of God in the Scripture, God may dispense where he will, and when he will, and may command him to do the contrary, as he commanded Abraham to kill his own son,* and as Sampson had by inspiration of God commandment to kill himself with pulling down the house on his own head at the feast of the Philistines.† Now, if I would do then, as you bade me right now, go tell him that such apparitions were illusions, and that sith God's word is in the Scripture against him plain for the prohibition, he must prove me the truth of his revelation, whereby I may know that it is not a false illusion; then shall he ask me again whereby that I can prove myself to be awake and talk with him, and not to be asleep and dream so, sith in my dream I may as surely ween so, as I know that I do so. And thus shall he drive me to the same bay, to which I would bring him.

ANTONY.—This is well said, cousin, but yet could he not scape you so. For the dispensation of God's common precept (which dispensation he must say that he hath by his private revelation) is a thing of such sort as sheweth itself nought and false. For it never hath had any sample like since the world began till now, that ever man hath read or heard of among faithful people commended First in Abraham, as touching the death of his son, God intended it not, but only tempted the towardness of the

* Gen. xxii.

† Judic. xvi.

father's obedience. In Sampson all men make not the matter very sure whether he be saved or not, but yet therein some matter and cause appeareth. For the Philistines being enemies to God, and using Sampson for their mocking-stock in scorn of God,* it is well likely that God gave him the mind to bestow his own life upon the revenging of the displeasure that those blasphemous Philistines did unto God. And that appeareth mostly clear by this, that though his strength failed him when he wanted his hair, yet had he not, as it seemeth, that strength evermore at hand while he had his hair, but at such times as it pleased God to give it him. Which thing appeareth by these words that the Scripture in some place of that matter saith: *Irruit virtus Domini in Sampsonem*—the power or might of God rushed into Sampson.† And so therefore, while this thing that he did in the pulling down of the house was done by the special gift of strength then at that point given him by God; it well declareth, that the strength of God, and therewith the spirit of God, entered into him therefor.

St. Austin also rehearseth, that certain holy, virtuous virgins, in time of persecution, being by infidels—God's enemies—pursued upon to be deflowered by force,‡ ran into a water and drowned themselves, rather than they would be bereaved of their virginity. And albeit that he thinketh, that it is not lawful for any other maid to follow their sample, but rather suffer other to do her any manner violence by force, and commit sin of his own upon her against her will, than wilfully, and thereby sinfully, herself become an homicide of herself; yet he thinketh, that in them it happed by the special instinct of the Spirit of God, that (for causes seen unto himself) would rather that they should avoid it with their own temporal death than abide the defiling and violation of their chastity. But now this good man neither hath any of God's enemies to be by his own death revenged on: nor any woman that violently pursueth him by force to bereave him of his virginity: nor never find we, that God

* August. de Civitat. Dei, lib. i. cap. 21.

† Judic. xv.

‡ August. de Civitat. Dei, lib. i. cap. 26.

proved any man's obedient mind by the commandment of his own slaughter of himself. Therefore is his case both plain against God's open precepts, and the dispensation strange and without sample, no cause appearing, nor well imaginable; but if he would think that God could no longer live without him, nor take him to him in such wise as he doth other men, but command him to come by a forbidden way, by which without other cause we never heard that ever he had any man else before.

Now where you think, that if you should after this bid him tell you by what way he knoweth that his intent riseth upon a true revelation, and not upon a false illusion, he would bid you then again tell him by what means you know, that you be talking with him, well waking, and not dream it sleeping: you may tell him again that men thus talk together as you do, and in such manner of wise as they may prove and perceive that they so do by the moving of themselves, and with putting the question thereof unto themselves for their pleasure. And the marking and considering thereof is in waking a daily common thing that every man doth, or may do when he will. And when they do it, they do it but of pleasure. But in sleep it happeth very seld that men dream that they so do, nor in their dream never put they question but for doubt. And therefore it is more reason that sith his revelation is such also that happeth so seld, and after happeth that men dream of such, than have such in deed; therefore it is more reason (you may tell him) that he shew you in such a rare thing, and a thing more like a dream, whereby he knoweth that himself is not asleep, than you in such a common thing among folk that are waking, and so seldom happening in a dream, should need to shew him whereby you know that you be not asleep. Besides this himself, to whom you should shew it, seeth and perceiveth the thing that he would bid you prove, but the thing that he would make you believe (the truth of his revelation which you bid him prove) you see not, he wotteth well himself. And therefore ere you believe it against the Scripture, it were well consonant unto reason that he should shew you whereby he knoweth it for a true

waking revelation, and not for a false dreaming delusion.

VINCENT.—Then shall he peradventure say to me again, that whether I believe him, or not, maketh him no matter: the thing toucheth himself, and not me. And himself is in himself as sure, that it is a true revelation, as that he can tell that he dreameth not but talketh with me waking.

ANTONY.—Without doubt, cousin, if he abide at that point, and can be by no reason brought to do so much as doubt, and can by no means be shogged out of his dead sleep, but will needs take his dream for a very truth, and

*Walkers in
their sleep.*

as some by night rise and walk about their chamber in their sleep, will so rise and hang himself: I can then no other ways see, but either bind him fast in his bed, or else essay whether that might hap to help him with which the common tale goeth, that a carver's wife in such a frantic phantasy help her husband. To whom when he told he would upon a Good Friday

*The carver that
would be cruci-
fied.*

needs have killed himself for Christ's sake, as Christ was killed for him, she would not in vain plead against his mind, but well and wisely put him in remembrance, that if he would die for Christ as Christ died for him, it were then convenient for him to die even after the same fashion. And that might not be by his own hands, but by the hand of some other: for Christ, pardie, killed not himself. And because her husband should need to make no more of counsel (for that would he not in no wise) she offered him, that for God's sake she would secretly herself crucify him on a great cross, that he had made to nail a new carved crucifix upon. Whereof when he was very glad, yet she bethought her, that Christ was bounden to a pillar and beaten first, and after crowned with thorns. Whereupon when she had (by his own assent) bound him fast to a post, she left not beating, with holy exhortation to suffer so much and so long, that ere ever she left work and unbound him, praying him nevertheless that she might put on his head, and drive it well down, a crown of thorns that she had writhen for him and brought him: he said, he thought this was enough for that year; he would pray God to for-

bear him of the remnant, till Good Friday come again. But when it came again the next year, then was his lust past: he longed to follow Christ no farther.

VINCENT.—Indeed, uncle, if this help him not, then will nothing help him, I trow.

ANTONY.—And yet, cousin, peradventure the devil might make him toward such a purpose first gladly suffer other pain, yea and minish his feeling too therein, that he may thereby the less fear his death: and yet are there peradventure sometime such things, and many more, to be essayed. For as the devil may hap to make him suffer, so may he hap to miss, namely, if his friends fall to prayer for him against his temptation: for that can himself never do, while he taketh it for none. But for conclusion, if the man be surely proved so inflexibly set upon the purpose to destroy himself as commanded thereto by God, that no good counsel that men can give him, nor any other thing that man may do to him, can refrain him, but that he would surely shortly kill himself: then, except only good prayer made by his friends for him, I can find no farther shift, but either have him ever in sight, or bind him fast in his bed. And so must he needs of reason be content to be ordered. For though himself take his phantasy for a true revelation, yet sith he cannot make us perceive it for such, likewise as he thinketh himself by his secret commandment bounden to follow it, so must he needs agree, that sith it is against the plain open prohibition of God, we be by the plain open precept bound to keep him from it.

Prayer the extreme remedy for this temptation.

VINCENT.—In this point, uncle, I can go no farther. But now if he were on the other side perceived to mind his destruction, and to go thereabout without heaviness of heart, thought and dulness, what way were there to be used with him then?

ANTONY.—Then were his temptation, as I told you before, properly pertaining to our matter. For then were he in a sore tribulation, and a very perilous: for then were it a token, that the devil had either by bringing him into some great sin, brought him into despair, or peradventure by his revela-

A sore and perilous temptation.

tions founden false and reprov'd, or by some secret sin of his deprehended and divulged, cast him both in despair of heaven through fear, and in a weariness of this life for shame, sith he seeth his estimation lost among other folk, of whose praise he was wont to be proud. And therefore, cousin, in such case as this is, the man is to be fairly handled and sweetly, and with dulce and tender loving words to be put in good courage, and comforted in all that men godly may.

Good counsel
and comfort in
this case.

And here must they put him in mind, that if he despair not, but pull up his courage and trust in God's great mercy, he shall have in conclusion great cause to be glad of this fall. For before he stood in greater peril than he was ware of, while he took himself for better than he was, and God, for favour that he bare him, hath suffered him to fall deep into the devil's danger, to make him thereby know what he was while he took himself for so sure. And therefore as he suffered him then to fall for a remedy against over-bold pride, so will God now (if the man meeken himself, not with unfruitful despair, but with fruitful penance) so set him up again upon his feet, and so strengthen him with his grace, that for this one fall that the devil has given him, he shall give the devil an hundred.

And here must he be put in remembrance of Mary Magdalen, of the prophet David, and specially of St. Peter, whose high bold courage took a foul fall, and yet because he despaired not of God's mercy, but wept and called upon it, how highly God took him into his favour again, in his Holy Scripture is well testified, and well through Christendom known. And now shall it be charitably done, if some good virtuous folk, such as himself esteemeth, and hath afore longed to stand in estimation with, do resort sometime unto him, not only to give him counsel, but also to ask advice and counsel of him in some cases of their own conscience, to let him thereby perceive, that they no less esteem him now, but rather more than they did before, sith they think him now by this fall better expert of the devil's craft, and thereby not only better instructed himself, but also better able to give

good advice and counsel to others. This thing will, in my mind, well amend and lift up his courage from the peril of that desperate shame.

VINCENT.—Methinketh, uncle, that this were a perilous thing. For it may peradventure make him set the less by his fall, and thereby cast him into his first pride, or into his other sin again, the falling whereinto drove him into this despair.

ANTONY.—I do not mean, cousin, that every fool shall at adventure fall in hand with him ; for so, lo, might it hap to do harm indeed. But, cousin, if a cunning physician have a man in hand, he can well discern, when, Such a wise physician is much worth. and how long, some certain medicine is necessary, which at another time ministered, or at that time overlong continued, might put the patient in peril. For if he have his patient in an ague, to the cure whereof he needeth his medicines (in their working) cold : yet if he hap, ere that fever be full cured, to fall into some such other disease, as except it were holpen with hot medicines were likely to kill the body before the fever could be cured : he would for awhile have his most care to the cure of that thing wherein were most present peril, and when that were once out of jeopardy, do the more exact diligence after, about the farther cure of the fever. And likewise, if the ship were in peril to fall into Scylla, the fear of falling into Charybdis on the other side shall never let any wise master thereof to draw him from Scylla toward Charybdis The wise ship-master. first of all, in all that ever he may. But when he hath him once so far away from Scylla that he seeth himself safe out of that danger, then will he begin to take good heed to keep him well from the other. And in likewise when this man is falling down to despair and to the final destruction of himself, a good, wise, spiritual leech will first look unto that, and by good comfort lift up his courage : and when he seeth that peril well past, care for the cure of his other faults after. Howbeit, even in the giving of his comfort, he may find ways enough in such wise to temper his words, that the man may take occasion of good courage, and yet far from

occasion giving of new recidivation into his former sin : sith the great part of his counsel shall be to courage him to amendment, and that is, pardie, far from falling to sin again.

VINCENT.—I think, uncle, that folk fall into this ungracious mind through the devil's temptation by many more means than one.

ANTONY.—That is, cousin, very true. For the devil taketh his occasions as he seeth them fall meet for him. Some he stirreth to it through weariness of themself after some great loss, some for fear of bodily harm, and some, as I said, for fear of worldly shame. One wist I myself,

Note this example.

which had been long reputed for an honest man, which was fallen in such a phantasy, that he was well near worn away therewith. But what he was tempted to do, that would he tell no man, but he told unto me that he was sore cumbered, and that it alway ran in his mind that folk's phantasies were fallen from him, and that they esteemed not his wit as they were wont to do, but ever his mind gave him that the people began to take him for a fool. And folk, of truth, did nothing so at all, but reputed him both for wise and honest.

Two other examples.

Two other knew I, that were marvellously afraid that they should kill themself, and could tell me no cause wherefore they so feared it, but only that their own mind so gave them. Neither loss had they any had, nor no such thing toward them, nor none occasion of any worldly shame : the one in body very well liking and lusty, and wondrous weary were they both twain of that mind, and alway they thought that do it they would not for nothing, but nevertheless they ever feared they should. And wherefore they so both feared, neither of them both could tell ; and the one, lest he should do it, desired his friends to bind him.

VINCENT.—This is, uncle, a marvellous strange manner.

ANTONY.—Forsooth, cousin, I suppose that many of them are in this case. The devil, as I said before, seeketh his occasions. For as St. Peter saith : *Adversarius vester diabolus quasi leo rugiens circuit, quærens quem*

devoret :*—Your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about, seeking whom he may devour. He marketh therefore well the state and the condition that every man standeth in, not only concerning their outward things, as lands, possessions, goods, authority, fame, favour, or hatred of the world, but also men's complexions within them, as health or sickness, good humour or bad, by which they be light-hearted or lumpish, strong-hearted or faint and feeble of spirit, bold, hardy, or timorous, and fearful of courage. And after as these things minister him matter of temptation, so useth he himself in the manner of his temptation.

Now likewise as in such folk that are full of young, warm, lusty blood and other humours, exciting the flesh to filthy, voluptuous living, the devil useth to make these things his instruments in tempting them and in provoking them thereunto: and when he findeth some folk full of hot blood and choler, he maketh those humours his instruments to set their hearts on fire in wrath and very fierce furious anger: so when he findeth some folk which through some dull melancholious humours are naturally disposed to fear, he casteth sometime such a fearful imagination in their mind, that without help of God they can never cast it out of their hearts.

Some, at the sudden falling of some horrible thought into their mind, have not only had a great abomination thereat (which abomination they well and virtuously had thereat), but the devil using their melancholious humour (and thereby their natural inclination to fear) for his instrument, hath caused them to conceive therewith such a deep dread beside, that they ween themselves with that abominable thought, to be fallen into such an outrageous sin, that they be ready to fall into despair of grace, weening that God hath given them over for ever: whereas that thought (were it never so horrible and never so abominable) is yet unto them that never like it, but even still abhor it, and strive still there against, matter of conflict and merit, and not any sin at all.

Some have, with holding a knife in their hands, sud-

* 1 Pet. v.

denly thought upon the killing of themself, and forthwith in devising what an horrible thing it were, if they should mishap so to do, have fallen into a fear that they should do so indeed, and have with often thinking thereon imprinted that fear so sore in their imagination, that some of them have not after cast it off without great difficulty, and some could never in their life be rid thereof, but have after in conclusion miserably done it indeed. But likewise as where the devil useth the blood of a man's own body toward his purpose in provoking him to lechery, the man must, and doth, with grace and wisdom, resist it: so must that man do, whose melancholious humours the devil abuseth toward the casting of such a desperate dread into his heart.

VINCENT.—I pray you, uncle, what advice were to be given him in such case?

ANTONY.—Surely methinketh his help standeth in two things,—counsel and prayer. First, as concerning counsel, likewise as it may be that he hath two things that hold him in his temptation; that is, to wit, some evil humours of his own body, and the cursed devil that abuseth them to his pernicious purpose: so must he need against them twain the counsel of two manner of folk: that is, to wit, physicians for the body and physicians for the soul. The bodily physician shall consider what abundance the man hath of these evil humours that the devil maketh his instruments of, in moving the man toward that fearful affection, and as well by diet convenient, and medicines meet therefor, to resist them, as by purgations to disburden the body of them. Nor let no man think strange that I would advise a man to take counsel of a physician for the body in such a spiritual passion. For sith the soul and the body be so knit and joined together, that they both make between them one person; the distemperance of either other engendereth sometime the distemperance of both twain.

*The mean how
to resist this
temptation.*

*The humours of
the body pro-
voke us to sin.*

And therefore, like as I would advise every man in every sickness of the body, to be shriven and seek of a good spiritual physician the sure health of his soul,

which shall not only serve against peril that may peradventure farther grow by that sickness than in the beginning men would ween were likely : but the comfort thereof and God's favour increasing therewith, shall also do the body good (for which cause the blessed apostle exhorteth men,* that they should in their bodily sickness induce the priests, and saith, that it should do them good both in body and soul), so would I sometime advise some men in some sickness of the soul, beside their spiritual leech, take also some counsel of the physician for the body. Some that are wretchedly disposed, and yet long to be more vicious than they be, go to physicians and poticaries, and inquire what things may serve to make them more lusty to their foul fleshly delight : and were it then any folly upon the other side, if he that feeleth himself against his will much moved unto such uncleanness, should inquire of the physician what things, without minishing of his health, were meet for the minishment of such foul fleshly motion ? Of spiritual counsel, the first is to be shriven, that by reason of his other sins the devil have not the more power upon him.

*Ghostly and
bodily physic
help each other.*

VINCENT.—I have heard some say, uncle, that when such folk have been at shrift, their temptation hath been more brim upon them than it was before.

ANTONY.—That think I very well : but that is a special token that shrift is wholesome for them, while the devil is with that most wroth. You find in some places of the Gospel, that the devil the person (whom he possessed) did most trouble when he saw that Christ would cast him out.† We must else let the devil do what he will, if we fear his anger : for with every good deed will he wax angry. Then is it in his shrift to be shewed him, that he not only feareth more than he needeth, but also feareth where he needeth not, and over that, is sorry of that thing whereof (but if he will willingly turn his good into his harm) he hath more cause to be glad. First, if he have cause to fear, yet feareth he more than he needeth ; for there is no devil so diligent to destroy him as God is to preserve him, nor no devil so near

*The virtue of
confession.*

* Jacob. v.

† Marc. ix.

him to do him harm as God is to do him good : nor all the devils in hell so strong to invade and assault him as God is to defend him, if he distrust him not, but faithfully put his trust in him. He feareth also when he needeth not. For where he dreadeth that he were out of God's favour, because such horrible thoughts fall into his mind, he must understand that sith they fall into his mind against his will, they be therefore not imputed unto him. He is finally sad of that he may be glad : for sith he taketh such thoughts displeasantly, and striveth and fighteth against them, he hath thereby a good token that he is in God's favour, and that God assisteth him and helpeth him, and may make himself sure, that so will God never cease to do, but if himself fail and fall from him first. And over that, this conflict that he hath against his temptation, shall (if he will not fall where he needeth not) be an occasion of his merit, and a right great reward in heaven : and the pain that he taketh therein shall for so much (as M. Gerson well sheweth) stand him in stead of his purgatory.

*This fight
standeth in
three things
chiefly.*

The manner of the fight against this temptation must stand in three things : that is, to wit, in resisting and in contemning, and in the invocation of help.

Resist must a man for his own part by reason, considering what a folly it were to fall where he needeth not, while he is not driven to it in avoiding any other pain, or in the hope of winning any manner of pleasure : but contrariwise should by that pain lose everlasting bliss and fall into everlasting pain : and if it were in avoiding of other great pain, yet could he void none so great thereby, as he should thereby fall into. He must also consider, that a great part of this temptation is in effect but the fear of his own phantasy, the dread that he hath lest he shall once be driven to it. Which thing he may be sure, that, but if himself will of his own folly, all the devils in hell can never drive him to, but his own foolish imagination may. For like as some man going

*A similitude of
the bridge.*

over an high bridge, waxeth so afraid through his own phantasy, that he falleth down indeed, which were

else able enough to pass over without any danger; and as some man shall upon such a bridge, if folk call upon him, ‘ You fall, you fall,’ fall with the phantasy that he taketh thereof, which bridge, if folk looked merrily upon him, and said, there is no danger therein, he would pass over well enough, and would not let to run thereon, if it were but a foot from the ground: thus fareth it in this temptation. The devil findeth the man of his own fond phantasy afraid, and then crieth he in the ear of his heart, “Thou fallest, thou fallest,” and maketh the fond man afraid, that he should at every foot fall indeed. And the devil so wearieth him with that continual fear (if he give the ear of his heart unto him), that at the last he draweth his mind from the due remembrance of God, and then driveth him to that deadly mischief indeed.

Therefore, like as against the vice of the flesh, the victory standeth not all whole in the fight, but sometime also in the flight (saving that it Flight is good some time. is indeed the part of a wise warrior’s fight, to A wise warrior. flee away from his enemies’ trains), so must a man in this temptation too, not only resist it alway with reasoning there against, but sometime set it clean at right nought, and cast it off when it cometh, and not once regard it, nor so much as vouchsafe to think thereon. Some folk have been clearly rid of such pestilent phantasies with very full contempt thereof, making a cross upon their hearts and bidding the devil avaunt, and sometime laugh him to scorn too, and then turn their mind unto some other matter. And when the devil hath seen that they have set so little by him, after many essays, made in such times as he thought most meet, he hath given that temptation quite over, both for that the proud spirit cannot endure to be mocked, and also lest with much tempting the man to the same, whereunto he could not in conclusion bring him, he should much thereby increase his merit.

The final fight is by invocation of God both by praying for himself, and desiring others also to pray for him, both poor folk for his alms, and other good folk for their

charity, specially good priests in the holy sacred service of the Mass, and not only them, but also his own good angel, and other holy saints, such as his devotion standeth specially unto. And if he be learned, let him use the Litany with the holy suffrages that follow, which is a The Litany is a very old prayer. prayer in the church of marvellous old antiquity, not made first, as some ween it were, by that holy man St. Gregory, which opinion rose of that, that in the time of a great pestilence in Rome, he caused the whole city to go in solemn procession therewith; but it was in use in the church many years before St. Gregory's days, as well appeareth by the books of other holy doctors and saints that were dead hundreds of years before St. Gregory was born. And holy St. Bernard Prayer to angels and saints. giveth counsel, that every man should make suit to angels and saints, to pray for him to God in the things that he would have sped at his holy hand.* If any man will stick at that, and say it needs not, because God can hear us himself, and will also say that it is perilous so to do, because they say we be not so counselled by no Scripture; I will not dispute the matter here. He that will not do it, I let him not to leave it undone. But yet for mine own part, I will as well trust to the counsel of St. Bernard, and reckon him for as good and as well learned in the Holy Scripture, as any man that I hear say the contrary: and better dare I jeopard my soul with the soul of St. Bernard than with his that findeth that fault in his doctrine.

Unto God himself every man counselleth to have recourse above all, and in this temptation to have special remembrance of Christ's passion, and pray him for the honour of his death, the ground of man's salvation, to keep the person thus tempted from that damnable death. Special verses may there be drawn out of the Psalter against the devil's wicked temptations, as for example: *Exurgat Deus, et dissipentur inimici ejus, et fugiant qui oderunt eum a facie ejus.*†—And many others, which are

* Bernard, Serm. de tripl. genere bonorum, et Serm. in Festo Omnium Sanctorum, et aliàs sæpe.

† Psal. lxxvii.

in such horrible temptation to God most pleasant, and to the devil very terrible : but none more terrible, nor none more odious to the devil, than the words with which our Saviour drove him away himself:—*Vade Sathana*,*—nor no prayer more acceptable unto God, nor more effectual for the matter, than those words which our Saviour hath taught himself,—*Ne nos inducas in tentationem, sed libera nos à malo*.† And I doubt not, by God's grace, but he that in such a temptation will use good counsel and prayer, and keep himself in good virtuous business and good virtuous company, and abide in the faithful hope of God's help, shall have the truth of God (as the prophet saith in the verse afore rehearsed) so compass him about with a pavice, that he shall not need to dread this night's fear of this wicked temptation. And thus will I finish this piece of the night's fear, and glad am I that we be past it, and come once unto the day to those other words of the prophet :—*A sagitta volante in die* : for methinketh I have made it a long night.

* Matth. iv.

† Matth. vi.

CHAPTER XVII.

Of the arrow flying in the day, which is, the spirit of pride in prosperity.



INCENT.—FORSOOTH, uncle, so have you : but we have not slept in it, but been very well occupied. But now I fear, except you make here a pause till you have dined, you shall keep yourself from your dinner over long.

ANTONY.—Nay, my cousin, for both brake I my fast even as you came in, and also you shall find this night and this day like a winter day and a winter night. For as the winter hath short days, and long nights, so shall you find that I made not this fearful night so long, but I shall make you this light courageous day as short. And so shall the matter require well of itself indeed. For in these words of the prophet : *Scuto circumdabit te veritas ejus, a sagitta volante in die*,—The truth of God shall compass thee round about with a pavise, from the arrow flying in the day,*—I understand the arrow of pride, with which the devil tempteth a man, not in the night, that is to wit, in tribulation and adversity (for that time is too discomfortable and too fearful for pride), but in the day, that is, to wit, in prosperity ; for that time is lightsome, lusty, and full of courage.

But surely this worldly prosperity, wherein That worldly prosperity is. a man so rejoiceth, and whereof the devil maketh him so proud, is but even a very short winter day.

* Psal. xc.

For we begin many full poor and cold, and up we fly like an arrow that were shot up into the air : and yet when we be suddenly shot up into the highest, ere we be well warm there, down we come unto the cold ground again, and then even there stick we still. And yet for the short while that we be upward and aloft : Lord ! how lusty and how proud we be, buzzing above busily like as a bumble bee flieth about in summer, never ware that he shall die in winter : and so fare many of us, God help us ! For in the short winter day of worldly wealth and prosperity, this flying arrow of the devil, this high spirit of pride, shot out of the devil's bow and piercing through our heart, beareth us up in our affection aloft into the clouds, where we ween we sit upon the rainbow and overlook all the world under us, accounting in the regard of our own glory such other poor souls, as were peradventure wont to be our fellows, for silly poor pigmies and ants. But this arrow of pride, fly it never so high into the clouds, and be the man that it carrieth up so high, never so joyful thereof : yet let him remember, that be this arrow never so light, it hath yet an heavy iron head. And therefore fly it never so high, down must it needs come at last, and on the ground must it light, and falleth sometime not in a very cleanly place : and then the pride turneth into rebuke and shame, so that there is then all the glory gone.

Of this arrow speaketh the wise man in the fifth chapter of Sapience, where he saith in the person of them that in pride and vanity passed the time of this present life, and after that so spent, passed hence into hell : *Quid profuit nobis superbia ? aut divitiarum jactantia quid contulit nobis ? Transierunt omnia illa tanquam umbra, etc. aut tanquam sagitta emissa in locum destinatum : divisus aer continuo in se reclusus est, ut ignoretur transitus illius : sic et nos nati continuo desivimus esse, et virtutis quidem nullum signum valuimus ostendere : in malignitate autem nostra consumpti sumus. Talia dixerunt in inferno hi qui peccaverunt :**—What hath pride profited us, or what good hath

* Sapien. v.

the glory of our riches done us? Passed are all these things like a shadow, &c., or like an arrow shot out into the place appointed: the air that was divided, is by-and-by returned into the place, and in such wise closed up again, that the way is not perceived in which the arrow went: and in likewise we, as soon as we were born, be by-and-by vanished away, and have left no token of any good virtue behind us, but are consumed, and wasted, and come to nought in our own malignity. They, lo, that have lived here in sin, such words have they spoken when they lay in hell.

Here shall you, good cousin, consider, that whereas the Scripture here speaketh of the arrow shot into his place appointed or intended; in the shooting of this arrow of pride there be divers purposings and appointings. For

Note the shot
of pride.

the proud man hath no certain purpose or appointment at any mark, butt, or prick upon the earth whereat he determineth to shoot, and there to stick and tarry: but ever he shooteth as children do that love to shoot up a cope high, to see how high their arrow can fly up. But now doth the devil intend and appoint a certain prick surely set in a place, into which he purposeth (fly this arrow never so high, and the proud heart therein) to have them light both at last: and that place is even in the very pit of hell. There is set the devil's

The mark or
butt of pride.

well-acquainted prick, and his very just mark, down upon which prick with his pricking shaft of pride he hath by himself a plain proof and experience that (but if it be stopped by some grace of God in the way) the soul that flieth up therewith, can never fail to fall. For when himself was in heaven, and began to fly up a cope high with that lusty flight of pride, saying: *Ascendam super astra, et ponam solium meum ad latera aquilonis, et similis ero Altissimo*,*—I will fly up above the stars, and set my throne on the side of the north, and will be like unto the Highest: long ere he could fly half so high, as in his heart he said he would, he was turned from a glorious bright angel into a black deformed devil; and from flying any farther upward, down was he thrown

* Isaïæ xiv.

into the deep dark dungeon of hell. Now may it peradventure, cousin, seem, that sith this kind of temptation of pride is no tribulation or pain; *Lucifer's fall.* all this that we speak of this arrow of pride flying forth in the day of prosperity were beside our matter.

VINCENT.—Verily, mine uncle, and so seemed it unto me, and somewhat was I minded so to say to you too: saving that, were it properly pertaining to the present matter, or somewhat digressing therefrom, good matter methought it was, and such as I had no lust to let.

ANTONY.—But now must you, cousin, consider, that though prosperity be contrary to tribulation, yet unto many a good man the devil's temptation unto pride in prosperity, is a greater tribulation, and more need hath of good counsel and good comfort both, than he, that never felt it, would ween. And that is the thing, cousin, that maketh me speak thereof, as of a thing proper to this matter. For, cousin, as it is a thing right hard to touch pitch,* and never file the fingers, to put flax unto fire, and yet keep it from burning, to keep a serpent in thy bosom, and yet be safe from stinging, to put young men with young women, without danger of foul fleshly desires: so is it hard for any person, either man or woman, *Wealth is dangerous.* in great worldly wealth and much prosperity, so to withstand the temptations of the devil, and the occasions given by the world, that they should keep themselves from the deadly desire of ambitious glory. Whereupon there followeth, if a man fall thereto, an whole flood of all unhappy mischief, arrogant manner, high sullen solemn port, overlooking the poor in word and countenance, displeasing and disdainous behaviour, ravine, extortion, oppression, hatred, and cruelty.

How many a good man, cousin, coming into great authority, casting in his mind the peril of such occasions of pride as the devil taketh of prosperity to make his instruments of, wherewith to move men to such high point of presumption, as engendereth so many great inconveniences, and feeling the devil therewith offering to them—

* Eccles. xiii.

self suggestions thereunto, they be sore troubled therewith, and somewhat so fraid thereof, that even in the day of prosperity they fall into the night's fear of pusillanimity, and doubt overmuch lest they should misuse themselves, leave the things undone, wherein they might use themselves well, and mistrusting the aid of God in holding them upright in their temptations, give place to the devil in contrary temptations. Whereby for faint heart, they leave off good business wherein they were well occupied, and under pretext (as it seemeth to themselves) of humble heart and meekness, and serving God in contemplation and silence, they seek their own ease and earthly rest unaware, wherewith (if it so be) God is not well content. Howbeit, if it so be that a man feel himself such indeed, as by the experience that he hath of himself, he perceiveth that in wealth and authority he doth his own soul harm, and cannot do therein the good that to his part appertaineth, but seeth the things that he should set his hand to sustain decay through his default, and fall to ruin under him, and that to the amendment thereof

Good counsel in this case. he leaveth his own duty undone; then would I in anywise advise him, to leave off that thing, be it spiritual benefice that he have, parsonage or bishopric, or temporal room and authority, and rather give it over quite, and draw himself aside and serve God, than take the worldly worship and commodity for himself, with the incommmodity of them whom his duty were to profit. But on the other side, if he see not the contrary, but that he may do his duty conveniently well, and feareth nothing, but only that the temptation of ambition and pride may turn peradventure his good purpose and make him decline unto sin, I say not nay, but that well done it is, to stand in moderate fear alway, whereof the Scripture saith: *Beatus homo, qui semper est pavidus*—Blessed is the man that is alway fearful:* and St. Paul saith: *Qui stat, videat ne cadat*—He that standeth, let him look that he fall not:† yet is over much fear perilous, and draweth toward the mistrust of God's gracious help, which immo-

* Proverb. xxviii.

† 1 Cor. x.

derate fear and faint heart Holy Scripture forbiddeth, saying: *Noli esse pusillanimis*—Be not feeble hearted or timorous.*

Let such a man therefore temper his fear with good hope, and think, that sith God hath set him in that place (if he think that God hath set him therein), God will assist him with his grace to the well using thereof: howbeit, if he came thereto by simony or by some such evil mean, then were that thing one good reason, wherefore he should the rather leave it off. But else, let him continue in his good business, and against the devil's provocation unto evil, bless himself, and call unto God, and pray; and look what thing the devil tempteth, to lean the more toward the contrary. Let him be piteous and comfortable to those that are in distress and affliction: I mean not, let every malefactor pass forth unpunished, and freely run out and rob at covers, but in his heart be sorry to see, that of necessity for fear of decaying the commonweal, men are driven to put malefactors to pain. And yet where he findeth good tokens and likelihood of amendment, there, in all that he may, help that mercy be had: there shall never lack desperately disposed wretches enough beside, upon whom, for ensample, justice may proceed. Let him think in his own heart every poor beggar his fellow.

VINCENT.—That will be very hard, uncle, for an honourable man to do, when he beholdeth himself richly apparelled, and the beggar rigged in his rags.

ANTONY.—If here were, cousin, two men that were beggars both, and afterward a great rich man would take the one unto him, and tell him, that for a little time he would have him in his house, and thereupon arrayed him in silk, and gave him a great bag by his side filled even full of gold, but giving him this knot therewith, that within a little while, out he should in his old rags again, and bear never a penny with him. If this beggar met his fellow now, while his gay gown were on, might he not for all his gay gear take him for his fellow still? And were he not a very fool, if for a

A proper example of two beggars.

* Eccles. viii.

wealth of a few weeks he would ween himself far his better?

VINCENT.—Yes, by my troth, uncle, if the difference of their state were none other.

ANTONY.—Surely, cousin, methinketh that in this world between the richest and the most poor the difference is scant so much. For let the highest look on the most base, and consider how poor they came both into this world, and then consider farther therewith how rich soever he be now, he shall yet within a while, peradventure less than one week, walk out again as poor as that beggar shall; and then, by my troth, methinketh this rich man much more than mad, if for the wealth of a little while, haply less than one week, he reckon himself in earnest any better than the beggar's fellow. And less than this can no man think that hath any natural wit, and will use it.

No man better
than a beggar's
fellow.

But now a Christian man, cousin, that hath the light of faith, cannot fail to think in this thing much farther. For he will think not only upon his bare coming hither, and his bare going hence again, but also upon the dreadful judgment of God, and upon the fearful pains of hell, and the inestimable joys of heaven. And in the considering of these things he will call to remembrance, that peradventure when this beggar and he be both departed hence, the beggar may be suddenly set up in such royalty, that well were himself that ever he was born, if he might be made his fellow. And he that well bethinketh him, cousin, upon these things, I verily think that the arrow of pride flying forth in the day of worldly wealth shall never so wound his heart that ever it shall bear him up one foot.

But now to the intent he may think on such things the better, let him use often to resort to confession, and there open his heart, and by the mouth of some good virtuous ghostly father have such things oft renewed in his remembrance. Let him also choose himself some secret solitary place in his own house, as far from noise and company as he conveniently can, and thither let him sometime secretly resort alone,

Special good
counsel against
pride, &c.

imagining himself as one going out of the world, even straight unto the giving up of his reckoning unto God of his sinful living. Then let him there before an altar, or some pitiful image of Christ's bitter passion (the beholding whereof may put him in remembrance of the thing, and move him to devout compassion), kneel down or fall prostrate, as at the feet of Almighty God, verily believing him to be there invisibly present, as without any doubt he is. There let him open his heart to God, and confess his faults such as he can call to mind, and pray God of forgiveness. Let him also call to remembrance the benefits that God hath given him either in general among other men, or privately to himself, and give him humble hearty thanks therefor. There let him declare unto God the temptations of the devil, the suggestions of the flesh, the occasions of the world, and of his worldly friends, much worse many times in drawing a man from God than are his most mortal enemies. Which thing our Saviour witnesseth himself, where he saith : *Inimici hominis domestici ejus*,—The enemies of a man are they that are his own familiars.* There let him lament and bewail unto God his own frailty, negligence, and sloth in resisting and withstanding of temptations, his readiness and pronity to fall thereunto. There let him beseech God of his gracious aid and help, to strength his infirmity withal, both in keeping him from falling, and when he by his own fault misfortuneth to fall, then with the helping hand of his merciful grace to lift him up and set him on his feet in the state of his grace again, and let this man not doubt but that God heareth him, and granteth him gladly this boon : and so dwelling in the faithful trust of God's help, he shall well use his prosperity, and persevere in his good profitable business, and shall have therein the truth of God so compass him about with a pavice of his heavenly defence, that of the devil's arrow flying in the day of worldly wealth, he shall not need to dread.

VINCENT.—Forsooth, uncle, I like this good counsel well, and I would ween that such as are in prosperity and

* Matth. x.

take such order therein, may do both to themselves, and other folk about, much good.

ANTONY.—I beseech our Lord, cousin, put this and better in the mind of every man that needeth it. And now will I touch one word or twain of the third temptation, whereof the prophet speaketh in these words: *A negotio perambulante in tenebris*,—From the business walking in the darknesses: and then will we call for our dinner, leaving the last temptation (that is to wit, *Ab incursu et dæmonio meridiano*,—From the incursion, and the devil of the mid-day), till afternoon, and then shall we therewith, God willing, make an end of all this matter.

VINCENT.—Our Lord reward you, good uncle, for your good labour with me. But for our Lord's sake take good heed, uncle, that you forbear not your dinner over long.

ANTONY.—Fear not that, cousin, I warrant you, for this piece will I make you but short.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Of the devil named Negotium, that is to wit, Business walking about in the darkneses.



HE prophet saith in the said psalm, *Qui habitat in adiutorio Altissimi, in protectione Dei cæli commorabitur. Scuto circumdabit te veritas ejus, non timebis, &c. A negotio perambulante in tenebris,*—He that dwelleth in the faithful hope of God's help, he shall abide in the protection or safeguard of the God of heaven; and thou that art such one, shall the truth of him so compass about with a pavice, that thou shalt not be afraid of the business walking about in the darkneses. *Negotium* is here, cousin, the name of a devil that is ever full of business, in tempting folk to much evil business. His time of tempting is in the darkneses. For you wot well, that beside the very full night, which is the deep dark, there are two times of dark-
Two dark-
nesses.
 nesses. The one, ere the morning wax light; the other, when the evening waxeth dark. Two times of like manner darkness are there also in the soul of man: the one, ere the light of grace be well in the heart sprungen up; the other, when the light of grace out of the soul beginneth to walk fast away.

In these two darkneses this devil, that is called Business, walketh about, and such fond
The devil called
Business.
 folk as will follow him he carrieth about with him, and setteth them a work with many manner bumbling business. He setteth, I say, some to seek the pleasures of the flesh in eating, drinking, and other filthy delight, and some he setteth about the incessant seeking for these

worldly goods: and if such busy folk, whom this devil, called Business (walking about in the darkneses) setteth a work with such business, our Saviour saith in the Gospel, *Qui ambulat in tenebris, nescit quò vadit*,—He that walketh in darkneses witteth not whither he goeth.* And surely in such case are they: for they neither wot which way they go, nor whither. For verily they walk round about, as it were in a round maze; when they ween themselves at an end of their business, they be but at the beginning. For is not the going about the serving of the flesh a business that hath no end, but evermore from the end cometh to the beginning again? For go they never so full fed to bed, yet evermore on the morrow as new be they to be fed again as they were the day before. Thus fareth it by the belly; thus fareth it by those parts that are beneath the belly. And as for covetise, it fareth like the fire, the more wood that cometh thereto, the more fervent and the more greedy it is.

But now hath this maze a centre or middle place, into which sometime they be conveyed suddenly when they ween they were not yet far from the brink. The centre or middle place of this maze is hell, and into that place be there busy folk that with this devil of Business walk about this busy maze in the darkneses, suddenly sometime conveyed, nothing ware whither they be going, and even while they ween that they were not far walked from the beginning, and that they had yet a great way to walk about before they should come to the end. But of these fleshly folk walking in this pleasant busy maze, the Scripture declareth the end:—*Ducunt in bonis dies suos, et in puncto ad inferna descendunt*,—They lead their life in pleasure, and at a pop down they descend into hell.† Of the covetous man saith St. Paul: *Qui volunt divites fieri, incidunt in temptationem et in laqueum diaboli, et desideria multa inutilia et nociva, quæ mergunt homines in interitum et perditionem*,—They that long to be rich do fall into temptation and into the grin of the devil, and

Beware the
maze that hath
such a centre.

* Johan. xii.

† Job xxi.

into many desires unprofitable and harmful, which drown men unto death and into destruction.* So, here is the middle place of this busy maze, the grin of the devil, the place of perdition and destruction that they fall and be caught and drowned in ere they be ware. 'The covetous rich man also that our Saviour speaketh of in the Gospel, that had so great plenty of corn that his barns would not receive it, but intended to make his barns larger, and said to himself that he would make merry many days, had weened (you wot well) that he had yet a great way yet to walk. But God said unto him, *Stulte, hac nocte tollent a te animam tuam: quæ autem parasti, cujus erunt?*—Fool, this night shall they take thy soul from thee, and then all this good that thou hast gathered, where shall it be?† Here you see that he fell suddenly into the deep centre of this busy maze, so that he was fallen full and whole therein long ere ever he had weened he should have come near thereto.

Now this wot I very well, that those that are walking about in this busy maze take not their business for any tribulation, and yet are many of them forwearied as sore, and as sore panged and pained therein, their pleasures being so short, so little, and so few, and their displeasures and their griefs so great, so continual, and so many, that it maketh me think upon a good worshipful man, which, when he divers times beheld his wife, what pain she took in straight binding up her hair to make her a fair large forehead, and with straight bracing in her body to make her middle small, both twain to her great pain for the pride of a little foolish praise: he said unto her, "Forsooth, madam, if God give you not hell, he shall do you great wrong. For it must needs be your own of very right: for you buy it very dear, and take very great pain therefor."

How many such
ladies be there
now!

They that now lie in hell for their wretched living here, do now perceive their folly in their more pain that they took here for the less pleasure. There confess they now their folly, and cry out, *Lassati sumus in via iniquitatis*,—We have been wearied in the way

* 1 Tim. vi.

† Luc. xii.

of wickedness.* And yet while they were walking therein, they would not rest themselves, but run on still in their weariness, and put themselves still unto more pain and more, for that little peevish pleasure, short and soon gone, that they took all that labour and pain for, beside the everlasting pain that followed it for their farther advantage after.

A notable saying and a true.

So help me God, and none otherwise but as I verily think, that many a man buyeth hell here with so much pain, that he might have heaven with less than the one-half. But yet, as I say, while these fleshly and worldly busy folk are walking about in this round busy maze of the devil that is called Business that walketh about in these two times of darkness, their wits are so by the secret enchantment of the devil bewitched, that they mark not the great long miserable weariness and pain that the devil maketh them take and

Note this also.

endure about nought, and therefore they take it for no tribulation: so that they need no comfort. And therefore it is not for their sakes that I speak all this, saving that it may serve them for counsel toward the perceiving of their own foolish misery, through the good help of God's grace beginning to shine upon them again.

But there are very good folk and virtuous that are in the daylight of grace, and yet because the devil tempteth them busily to such fleshly delight, and sith they see plenty of worldly substance fall unto them, and feel the devil in likewise busily tempt them to set their heart thereupon, they be so troubled therewith, and begin to fear thereby, that they be not with God in the light, but with this devil that the prophet calleth *Negotium*, that is to say, Business, walking about in the two times of darkness. Howbeit, as I said before of those good folk and gracious that are in the worldly wealth of great power and authority, and thereby feel the devil's arrow of pride: so say I now here again of these that stand in dread of fleshly foul sin and covetise, sith they be but tempted therewith and follow it not, albeit that they do well to stand ever in moderate fear, lest with waxing over bold,

* Sap. v.

and setting the thing over light, they might peradventure mishap to fall in thereto: yet sore to vex and trouble themself with the fear of loss of God's favour therefor, is without necessity, and not alway without peril. For, as

- I said before, it withdraweth the mind of a man far from spiritual consolation of the good hope that he should have in God's help. And as for these temptations, while he that is tempted followeth them not, the fight against them serveth a man for matter of merit and reward in heaven, if he not only flee the deed, the consent and the declaration, but also (in that he conveniently may) flee from all the occasions thereof. And this point is in those fleshly temptations a thing eth to perceive, and meetly plain enough. But in these worldly businesses pertaining unto covetise, thereon is the thing somewhat more dark, and in the perceiving more difficulty, and very great troublous fear doth there oftentimes arise thereof in the hearts of very good folk when the world falleth fast unto them, because of the sore words and terrible threats, that God in Holy Scripture speaketh against those that are rich: as where St. Paul saith: *Qui volunt divites fieri, incidunt in tentationem, et in laqueum diaboli*,—They that will be rich fall into temptation, and into the grin of the devil.* And where our Saviour saith himself: *Facilius est camelum per foramen acus transire, quàm divitem intrare in regnum Dei*,—It is more easy for a camel, or, as some say (for so *camelus* signifieth in the Greek tongue), for a great cable-rope, to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God:† no marvel now though good folk that fear God take occasion of great dread at so dreadful words, when they see worldly goods fall unto them, and some stand in doubt whether it be lawful for them to keep any goods or no. But evermore in all these places of Scriptures, the having of the worldly goods is not the thing that is rebuked and threatened, but the affection the haver unlawfully beareth thereto. For where St. Paul saith, *Qui volunt divites fieri, &c.*—They that will be made rich, &c., he speaketh not of the

Carnal temptations are sooner seen than covetise, enbp, &c.

* 1 Tim. vi.

† Luc. xviii.

having, but of the will and desire and affection to have,
 and the longing for it: for that cannot be
 lightly without sin. For the thing that folk
 so sore long for, they will make many shifts to
 get, and jeopard themselves therefor. And to declare that
 the having of riches is not forbidden, but the inordinate
 affection of the mind sore set thereupon, the prophet saith :
Divitiæ si affluent, nolite cor apponere,—If riches flow unto
 you, set not your hearts thereupon.* And albeit that our
 Lord, by the said ensample of the camel, or the cable-
 rope, to come through the needle's eye, said that it is not
 only hard, but also impossible, for a rich man to enter
 into the kingdom of heaven : yet he declared, that though
 the rich man cannot get into heaven of himself, yet God,
 he said, can get him in well enough. For unto man, he
 said, it was impossible, but not unto God; for unto God,
 he said, all things are possible. And yet over that, he told
 of which manner rich men he meant that could not get into
 the kingdom of heaven, saying : *Filioli, quam difficile est*
confidentes in pecuniis in regnum Dei introire!—My
 babes, how hard is it for them that put their trust and
 confidence in their money, to enter into the kingdom of
 God ! †

VINCENT.—This is, I suppose, uncle, very true, and
 else God forbid ! For else were the world in a full hard
 case, if every rich man were in such danger and peril.

ANTONY.—That were it, cousin, indeed; and so, I
 ween, is it yet. For I fear me that to the multitude,
 there be very few, but that they long sore to
 be rich : and of those that long so to be, very
 few reserved also, but that they set their hearts very sore
 thereon.

VINCENT.—That is, uncle, I fear me, very true, but yet
 not the thing that I was about to speak of, but the thing
 that I would have said was this : that I cannot well per-
 ceive (the world being such as it is, and so many poor
 people therein) how any man may be rich, and keep him
 rich without any danger of damnation therefor. For all
 the while that he seeth poor people so many that lack,

* Psal. lxi.

† Marc. x.

while himself hath to give them, and whose necessity (while he hath wherewith) he is bound in such case of duty to relieve, so far forth that holy St. Ambrose saith, that whoso that die for default where we might help them, we kill them ourself:* I cannot see but that every rich man hath great cause to stand in great fear of damnation, nor I cannot perceive, as I say, how he can be delivered of that fear, as long as he keepeth his riches. And therefore though he might keep his riches, if there lacked poor men, and yet stand in God's favour therewith, as Abraham did, and many another holy rich man since; yet in such abundance of poor men as there be now in every country, any man that keepeth any riches, it must needs be that he hath an inordinate affection thereunto, while he giveth it not out unto the poor needy persons, that the duty of charity bindeth and straineth him to. And thus, uncle, in this world at this day, meseemeth your comfort unto good men that are rich and troubled with fear of damnation for the keeping, can very scantily serve.

ANTONY.—Hard it is, cousin, in many manner things, to bid or forbid, affirm or deny, reprove or allow, a matter nakedly proposed and set forth, or precisely to say, this thing is good, or this thing is nought, without consideration of the circumstances. Holy St. Austin telleth of a physician that gave a man a medicine in a certain disease that help him.† The selfsame man, at another time in selfsame disease, took the selfsame medicine himself, and had thereof more harm than good; which thing when he shewed unto the physician, and asked him whereof that harm should hap; “that medicine,” quoth he, “did thee no good but harm, because thou tookest it when I gave it thee not.” This answer St. Austin very well alloweth, for that though the medicine were one, yet might there be peradventure in the sickness some such difference as the patient perceived not, yea or in the man himself, or in the place, or in the time of the year. Many things might make the lot, for which the physician would not then have given him the selfsame medicine that he gave him before. To peruse every circumstance that might,

* In Luc. lib. viii. cap. 18.

† Ad Marcellinum, Epistola v.

cousin, in this matter be touched, and were to be considered and weighed, would indeed make this part of this devil of Business a very busy piece of work and a long. But I shall a little open the point that you speak of, and shall shew you what I think therein, with as few words as I conveniently can, and then will we go to dinner.

First, cousin, he that is a rich man, and keepeth all his good, he hath, I think, very good cause to be very afraid indeed. And yet I fear me, that such folk fear it least; for they be very far from the state of good men sith if they keep still all, then are they very far from charity, and do (you wot well) alms, either little or none at all. But now is our question, cousin, not in what case the rich man standeth that keepeth all, but whether we should suffer men to stand in a perilous dread and fear for the keeping of any great part. For if that by the keeping still of so much as maketh a rich man still, they stand in the state of damnation; then are the curates bounden plainly to tell them so, according to the commandment of God given unto them all in the person of Ezekiel: * *Si dicente me ad impium, morte morieris, non annuntiaveris ei, &c.*—If when I say to the wicked man, thou shalt die, thou do not shew it to him, nor speak it unto him, that he may be turned from his wicked way and may live, he shall soothly die in his wickedness, and his blood shall I verily require of thy hand.

But, cousin, though God invited men unto the following of himself in wilful poverty, by the leaving of all together at once for his sake, as the thing whereby with being out of the solicitude of worldly business, and far from the desire of earthly commodities, they may the more speedily get and attain the state of spiritual affection, and the hungry desire and longing for celestial things; yet doth he not command every man so to do upon the peril of damnation. For where he saith,† *Qui non renunciaverit omnibus quæ possidet non potest esse meus discipulus*,—He that forsaketh not all that ever he hath, cannot be my disciple,

Wilful poverty, and the reasons why it draweth men more toward heaven.

* Ezek. xxxiii.

† Luc. xiv.

he declareth well by other words of his own in the self-same place a little before, what he meaneth. For there saith he more, *Si quis venit ad me, et non odit patrem suum, et matrem, et uxorem, et filios, et fratres, et sorores, adhuc autem et animam suam, non potest esse meus discipulus*,—He that cometh to me, and hateth not his father, and his mother, and his wife, and his children, and his brethren, and his sisters, yea and his own life too, cannot be my disciple.* Here meaneth our Saviour Christ, that none can be his disciple, but if he love him so far above all his kin, and above his own life too, that for the love of him, rather than to forsake him, he shall forsake them all. And so meaneth he by those other words, that whosoever do not so renounce and forsake all that ever he hath in his own heart and affection, that he will rather lose it all, and let it go every whit, than deadly displease God with the reserving of any one part thereof, he cannot be Christ's disciple; sith Christ teacheth us to love God above all thing. And he loveth not God above all thing, that contrary to God's pleasure keepeth any thing that he hath. For that thing he sheweth himself to set more by than by God, while he is better content to lose God than it. But, as I said, to give away all, or that no man should be rich or have any substance, that find I no commandment of.

Christ's true
disciple.

What it is to
love God above
all.

There are, as our Saviour saith, in the house of his Father many mansions,† and happy shall he be that shall have the grace to dwell even in the lowest. It seemeth verily by the Gospel, that those, which for God's sake patiently suffer penury, shall not only dwell above those in heaven, that live here in plenty in earth, but also that heaven in some manner of wise more properly belongeth unto them, and is more specially prepared for them, than it is for the rich, by that, that God in the Gospel counselleth the rich folk to buy in a manner heaven of them, where he saith unto the rich man, *Facite vobis amicos de Mammona iniquitatis, ut cum defeceritis, recipiant vos in æterna tabernacula*,—Make you

Heaven pre-
pared specially
for the poor.

* Luc. xiv.

† Johan. xiv.

friends of the wicked riches, that when you fail here they may receive you into everlasting tabernacles.* But now although this be thus, in respect of the riches and the poverty compared together, yet they being good men both, there may be some other virtue beside, wherein the rich man may so peradventure excel, that he may be in heaven far above the poor man that was here in earth in other virtues far under him, as the proof appeareth clearly in Lazarus and Abraham.†

Nor I say not this, to the intent to comfort rich men in heaping up of riches, for a little comfort is sent enough thereto for them. They be not so proud-hearted and obstinate, but that they would, I ween, to that counsel be with right little exhortation very conformable. But I say this, for that those good men, to whom
Comfort for good rich men. God giveth substance and the mind to dispose it well, and yet not the mind to give it all away at once, but for good causes to keep some substance still, should not despair of God's favours for the not doing of the thing which God hath given them no commandment of, nor drawn by any special calling thereunto.

Of Zaccheus. Zaccheus, lo, that climbed up into the tree for desire that he had to behold our Saviour, at such time as Christ called aloud unto him, and said, "Zaccheus, make haste and come down, for this day must I dwell in thy house,"‡ he was so glad thereof, and so touched inwardly with special grace to the profit of his soul, that whereas all the people murmured much that Christ would call him and be so familiar with him, as of his own offer to come unto his house, considering that
Publicans. they knew him for the chief of the publicans, that were customers or toll-gatherers of the emperor's duties, all which whole company were among the people sore infamed of raven, extortion, and bribery, and then Zaccheus, not only the chief of that fellowship, but also grown greatly rich, whereby the people accounted him in their own opinion, for a man very sinful and nought; he forthwith by the instinct of the Spirit of God, in reproach of all such temerarious bold and blind judg-

* Luc. xvi.

† Ibidem.

‡ Luc. xix.

ment given upon a man, whose inward mind and sudden change they cannot see, shortly proved them all deceived, and that our Lord had at those few words outwardly spoken to him, so touched him, that his grace so wrought in his heart within that whatsoever he was before, he was then unwares unto them all, suddenly waxen good. For he made haste and came down, and gladly received Christ, and said: "Lo, Lord, the one half of my goods here I give unto poor people, and yet over that, if I have in any thing deceived any man, here am I ready to recompense him fourfold as much."

VINCENT.—This was, uncle, a gracious hearing: but yet I marvel me somewhat, wherefore Zaccheus used his words in that manner of order. For methinketh, he should first have spoken of making restitution unto those whom he had beguiled, and then speak of giving his alms after. For restitution is, you wot well, ^{Restitution is} duty; and a thing of such necessity, ^{of duty.} that in respect of restitution, alms-deed is but voluntary. Therefore it might seem, that to put men in mind of their duty in making restitution first, and doing their alms after, Zaccheus should have said more conveniently, if he had said first, that he would make every man restitution whom he had wronged, and then give half in alms of that that remained after: for only that might he call clearly his own.

ANTONY.—This is true, cousin, where a man hath not enough to suffice for both. But he that hath, is not bound to leave his alms ungiven to the poor man that is at his hand, and peradventure calleth upon him, till he go seek up all his creditors, and all those that he hath wronged, so far peradventure asunder, that leaving the one good deed undone the while, he may before they come together, change that good mind again, and do neither the one nor the other. It is good alway, therefore, to be doing some good out of hand, ^{Be ever doing} while we think thereon: grace shall the better ^{some good out} stand with us, and increase also to go the farther in the ^{of hand.} other after. And this I answer, if the man had there done the one out of hand, the giving (I mean) half in alms,

and not so much as speak of restitution, till after; whereas now, though he spake the one in order before the other, and yet all at one time, the thing remained still in his liberty, to put them both in execution after such order as he should then think expedient.

But now, cousin, did the Spirit of God temper the tongue of Zaccheus in the utterance of these words, in such wise, as it may well appear the saying of the wise man to be verified in them, where he saith, *Domini est gubernare linguam*,—To God it belongeth to govern the tongue.* For here when he said he would give half of his whole good unto poor people, and yet beside that, not only recompense any man whom he had wronged, but more than recompense him by three times as much again; he double reprov'd the false suspicion of the people that accounted him for so evil, that they reckoned in their mind all his good gotten in effect with wrong, because he

The people's
suspicions some-
time false.

was grown to substance in that office which was commonly misused extorciously. But his words declared, that he was rife enough in his reckoning, that if half his goods were given away, yet were he well able to yield every man his duty with the other half, and yet leave himself no beggar neither: for he said not, he would give all away.

Should God
they would in-
deed!

Would God, cousin, that every rich Christian man that is reputed right worshipful, yea and (which yet in my mind more is) reckoned for right honest too, would and were able, to do the thing that little Zaccheus the same great publican (were he Jew, or were he Paynim) said! that is to wit, with less than half his goods recompense every man whom he has wronged four times as much; yea, yea, cousin, as much for as much, hardly, and then they that receive it shall be content (I dare promise for them) to let the other thrice as much go, and forgive it, because it was one of the hard points of the old law, whereas Christian men must be full of forgiving, and not use to require and exact their amends to the uttermost.

But now for our purpose here, notwithstanding that he

* Prover. xvi.

promised not, neither to give away all, nor to become a beggar neither, no nor yet to leave of his office neither : which albeit that he had not used before peradventure in every point so pure, as St. John Baptist had taught them the lesson, *Nihil amplius, quàm constitutum est vobis, faciat*,—Do no more than is appointed unto you ;* yet forasmuch as he might both lawfully use his substance that he minded to reserve, and lawfully might use his office too, in receiving the prince's duty according to Christ's express commandment, *Reddite quæ sunt Cæsaris, Cæsari*,—Give the emperor those things that are his,†—refusing all extortion and bribery beside, our Lord well allowing his good purpose, and exacting no farther forth of him concerning his worldly behaviour, answered and said, *Hodie salus facta est huic domui, eo quod et ipse filius sit Abrahæ*,—This day is health come to this house, for that he too is the son of Abraham.‡

But now forget I not, cousin, that in effect thus far you condescend unto me, that a man may be rich, and yet not out of the state of grace, nor out of God's favour. Howbeit you think, that though it may be so at some time, or in some place, yet at this time, and in this place, or any such other like, wherein be so many poor people, upon whom they be (you think) bounden to bestow their good, they can therefore keep no riches with good conscience. Verily, cousin, if that reason would hold, I ween the world was never such anywhere in which any man might have kept any substance without the danger of damnation. As for since Christ's days to the world's end, we have the witness of his own words, that there hath never Poor folk shall there never lack. lacked poor men, nor never shall. For he said himself, *Pauperes semper habebitis vobiscum, quibus cum vultis, benefacere potestis*,—Poor men shall you alway have with you, whom, when you will, you may do good unto.§ So that, as I tell you, if your rule should hold, then were there, I ween, no place in no time since Christ's days hitherto, nor (as I think) in as long before that neither, nor never shall there hereafter, in which there

* Luc. iii.

† Marc. x. ii.

‡ Luc. xix.

§ Matth. xxvi. ; Marc. xiv.

could any man abide rich without the danger of eternal damnation, even for his riches alone, though he demeaned it never so well. But, cousin, men of substance must there needs be; for else shall you have more beggars, pardie, than there be, and no man left able to relieve another. For this think I in my mind a very sure conclusion, that if all the money that is in this country, were to-morrow next brought together out of every man's hand, and laid all upon one heap, and then divided out unto every man alike, it would be on the morrow after worse than it was the day before. For I suppose when it were all equally thus divided among all, the best should be left little better than a beggar almost is now: and yet he that was a beggar before, all that he shall be the richer for that he should thereby receive, shall not make him much above a beggar still, but many one of the rich men, if their riches stood but in moveable substance, shall be safe enough from riches haply for all their life after.

Men cannot, you wot well, live here in this world, but if that some one man provide a mean of living for some other many. Every man cannot have a ship of his own, nor every man be a merchant without a stock: and these things, you wot well, must needs be had; nor every man cannot have a plough by himself. And who might live by the tailor's craft, if no man were able to put a gown to make? Who by masonry? Or, who could live a carpenter, if no man were able to build neither church, nor house? Who should be makers of any manner of cloth, if there lacked men of substance to set sundry sorts a work? Some man that hath but two ducats in his house, were better forbear them both and leave himself not a farthing, but utterly lose all his own, than that some rich man, by whom he is weekly set a work should of his money lose the one half: for then were himself like to lack work. For surely the rich man's substance is the wellspring of the poor man's living. And therefore here would it fare by the poor man, as it fared by the woman in one of Æsop's fables, which had an hen that laid

There must
needs be some
rich men.

The rich man's
substance is
the poor man's
living.

The hen that
laid golden
eggs.

her every day a golden egg; till on a day she thought she would have a great many eggs at once, and therefore she killed her hen, and found but one or twain in her belly, so that for covetise of those few, she lost many.

But now, cousin, to come to your doubt, how it may be that a man may with conscience keep riches with him, when he seeth so many poor men upon whom he may bestow it: verily that might he not with conscience do, if he must bestow it upon as many as he may. And so must of truth every rich man do, if all the poor folk that he seeth be so specially by God's commandment committed unto his charge alone, that because our Saviour saith, *Omni petenti te, da*,—Give every man that asketh thee, therefore should he be bound to give out still to every beggar that will ask him, as long as any penny lasteth in his purse. But verily, cousin, that saying hath (as other places in Scripture have) need of interpretation. For as holy St. Austin saith: Though Christ say, Give every man that asketh thee, he saith not yet, give them all that they will ask thee. But surely all were one, if he meant to bind me by commandment, to give every man without exception somewhat; for so should I leave myself nothing.

Our Saviour in that place of St. Luke, speaketh both of the contempt that we should in heart have of these worldly things, and also of the manner that men should use toward their enemies. For there he biddeth us love our enemies, give good words for evil, and not only suffer injuries patiently, both by taking away our goods and harm done unto our bodies, but also be ready to suffer the double and over that, to do them good again, that do us the harm. And among these things, he biddeth us give every man that asketh, meaning, that in the thing that we may conveniently do a man good, we should not refuse it, what manner of man soever he be, though he were our mortal enemy, namely where we see, that but if we help him ourself, the person of the man should stand in peril of perishing. And therefore saith St. Paul, *Si esurierit inimicus tuus, da illi cibum*,—If thine enemy be an hungered give him meat.* But now,

This place of
St. Luke truly
expounded.

* Rom. xii.

though I be bound to give every manner of man in some manner of his necessity, were he my friend, or my foe, Christian man, or heathen; yet am I not unto all men bound alike, nor unto any man in every case alike. But, as I began to tell you, the differences of the circumstances make great change in the matter.

St. Paul saith, *Qui non providet suis, est infideli deterior*,—He that provideth not for those that are his, is

To these must
we first gibe.

worse than an infidel.* Those are ours that are belonging to our charge, either by nature, or law, or any commandment of God. By nature, as our children; by law, as our servants in the household. So that albeit these two sorts be not ours all alike, yet would I think that the least ours of the twain, that is to wit, our

Duty to ser-
vants.

servants, if they need and lack, we be bounden to look to them, and provide for their need, and see so far forth as we may, that they lack not the things that should serve for their necessity, while they dwell in our service. Meseemeth also, that if they fall sick in our service, so that they cannot do the service that we retain them for; yet may we not in any wise turn them then out of doors, and cast them up comfortless while they be not able to labour and help themselves; for this were a thing against all humanity. And surely, if he were but a wayfaring man that I received into my house as a guest, if he fall sick therein, and his money gone, I

Note.

reckon myself bounden to keep him still, and rather to beg about for his relief than cast him out in that case to the peril of his life, what loss soever I should hap to sustain in keeping of him. For when God hath by such chance sent him to me, and there once matched me with him, I reckon myself surely charged with him, till I may without peril of his life be well and conveniently discharged of him.

By God's commandment are in our charge, our parents. For by nature we be in theirs, sith (as St. Paul saith) it is not the children's part to provide for the parents, but the

Duty to chil-
dren.

parents' to provide for the children:† provide, I mean, conveniently due learning, or good oc-

* Tim. v.

† 2 Cor. xii.

cupations to get their living by, with truth and the favour of God, but not to make provision for them of such manner of living, as to Godward they should live the worse for; but rather if they see by their manner that too much would make them nought, the father should then give them a great deal the less. But although that nature put not the parents in the charge of the children; yet not only God commandeth, but the order of nature also compelleth, that the children should both in reverent behaviour honour their father and mother, and also in their necessity maintain them. And yet as much as God and nature both bindeth us to the sustenance of our own father, his need may be so little, though it be somewhat, and a frem'd man's so great, that both God and nature also would, I should in such unequal need, relieve that urgent necessity of a stranger, yea my foe, and God's enemy too, the very Turk or Saracen, before a little need (and unlikely to do great harm) in my father, and my mother too: for so ought they both train themselves to be well content I should. But now, cousin, out of the case of such extreme needs well perceived and known unto myself, I am not bounden to give every beggar that will ask, nor to believe every fainor that I meet in the street, that will say himself that he is very sick, nor to reckon all the poor folk committed by God only so to my charge alone, that none other man should give them nothing of his, till I have first given out all mine, nor am not bounden neither to have so evil opinion of all other folk save myself, as to think, that but if I give help the poor folk shall all fail at once; for God hath left in all this quarter no more good folk now, but me. I may think better by my neighbours, and worse by myself than so, and yet come to heaven by God's grace well enough.

Note well.

Duty to parents.

Note.

Discretion in giving alms.

VINCENT.—Marry, uncle, but some man will peradventure be right well content in such cases, to think his neighbours very charitable, to the intent that he may think himself at liberty to give nothing at all.

ANTONY.—That is, cousin, very true, so will there some

be content either to think, or make as though they thought. But those are they that are content to give nought, because they be nought. But our question is, cousin, not of them, but of good folk, that by the keeping of worldly goods and keeping thereof may stand with the state of grace. Now think I, cousin, that if a man keep riches about him for a glory and royalty of the world, in consideration whereof he taketh a great delight, and liketh himself therefor the better, taking the poorer for the lack thereof as one far worse than himself, such a mind is very vain, foolish, proud, and such a man is very naught indeed.

A damnable state of riches. But on the other side, if there be a man such (as would God there were many!) that hath unto riches no love, but having it fall abundantly unto him, taketh to his own part no great

A perfect good state in riches. pleasure thereof, but as though he had it not, keepeth himself in like abstinence and penance

In all external actions good men must somewhat yield to worldly fashions. privily, as he would do in case he had it not, and in such things as he doth openly bestow somewhat more liberally upon himself in his house after some manner of the world, lest he should give other folk occasion to marvel and muse and talk of his manner, and misreport him for an hypocrite, therein between God and him doth truly protest and testify, as did the good Queen Hesther,* that he

doth it not for any desire thereof in the satisfying of his own pleasure, but would with as good will or better, forbear the possession of riches, saving for the commodity that other men have by its disposing thereof, as percase in keeping of a good household in good Christian order and fashion, and in setting other folk a work with such things as they gain their living the better by his means, this man's having of riches I might (methinketh) in merit match in a manner with another man's forsaking of all, if there were none other circumstances more pleasant unto God farther added unto the forsaking beside, as percase for the more fervent contemplation by reason of the solicitude of all worldly business left off, which was

* Hester. xiv.

the thing that made Mary Magdalene's part the better.* For else would Christ have caused her much more thank, to go about and be busy in helping her sister Martha to dress his dinner, than to take her stool, and sit down at her ease, and do nought.

Now, if he that have this good and riches by him, have not haply fully so perfect mind, but somewhat loveth to keep himself from lack, and not so fully as a pure Christian fashion requireth, determined to abandon his pleasure; well, what will you more? The man is so much the less perfect than I would he were, and haply than himself would wish, if it were as easy to be it, as to wish it. But yet not by and bye in the state of damnation, no more than he that forsaking all and entering into religion, is not yet alway so clear departed from all worldly affections, as himself would very fain he were and much bewaileth that he is not. Of whom some man that hath in the world willingly forsaken the likelihood of right worshipful rooms, hath afterward had much ado to keep himself from the desire of the office of cellarer or sexton, to bear yet at the leastwise some rule and authority, though it were but among the bells. But God is more merciful to man's imperfection, if the man know it, and knowledge it, and mislike it, and little and little labour to amend it, than to reject and cast off him, that after as his frailty can bear and suffer, hath a general intent and purpose to please him, and to prefer or set by nothing in all this world before him.

And therefore, cousin, to make an end of this piece withal;—*A negotio perambulante in tenebris*,—Of this devil, I mean, that the prophet calleth Business walking in the darkness: if a man have a mind to serve God and please him, and rather lose all the good he hath than wittingly do deadly sin, and would withal murmur or grudge give it every whit away, in case that God should so command him, and intend to take it patiently, if God would take it from him, and glad would be to use it unto God's pleasure, and do his diligence to know and to be taught, what manner

A second and less perfect state in riches.

How riches may be kept with salvation.

* Luc. x.



using thereof God would be pleased with; and therein from time to time be glad to follow the counsel of good virtuous men, though he neither give away all at once nor give every man that asketh him neither (let every man fear and think in this world, that all the good that he doth, or can do, is a great deal too little), but yet for all that fear, let him dwell therewith in the faithful hope of God's help. And then shall the truth of God so compass him about (as the prophet saith) with a pavice, that he shall not so need to dread the trains and the temptations of this devil that the prophet calleth Business, walking about in the darknesses, but that he shall for all the having of riches and worldly substance, so avoid his trains and his temptations, that he shall in conclusion by the great and almighty mercy of God, get into heaven well enough. And now was I, cousin, about lo, after this piece thus ended, to bid them bring in our dinner, but now shall I not need, lo; for here they come with it already.

VINCENT.—Forsooth, good uncle, God disposeth and timeth your matter and your dinner both, I trust. For the end of your tale (for which our Lord reward you!) and the beginning here of your good dinner too (from which it were more than pity that you should any longer have tarried) meet even at the close together.

ANTONY.—Well, cousin, now will we say grace, and then for a while will we leave talking, and essay how our dinner shall like us, and how fair we can fall to feeding. Which done, you know my customable guise (for manner I may not call it, because the guise is unmannerly) to bid you not farewell, but steal away from you to sleep. But, you wot well, I am not wont at afternoon to sleep long, but even a little to forget the world. And when I wake, I will again come to you, and then is (God willing) all this long day ours, wherein we shall have time enough, to talk more than shall suffice for the finishing of this one part of our matter, which only now remaineth.

VINCENT.—I pray you, good uncle, keep your customable manner, for manner may you call it well enough. For as it were against good manner, to look that a man

should kneel down for courtesy, when his knee is sore ; so is it very good manner, that a man of your age, aggrieved with such sundry sicknesses beside, that suffer you not alway to sleep when you should, let his sleep not slip away, but take it when he may. And I will, uncle, in the meanwhile steal from you too, and speed a little errand, and return to you again.

ANTONY.—Tarry while you will, and when you have dined, go at your pleasure, but I pray you tarry not long.

VINCENT.—You shall not need, uncle, to put me in mind of that ; I would as fain have up the remnant of our matter.

BOOK III.

The Third and Last Book of Consolation and Comfort in Tribulation.

INCENT.—SOMEWHAT have I tarried the longer, uncle, partly for that I was loth to come over soon lest my soon coming might have happed to have made you wake too soon: but specially by the reason that I was letted with one that shewed me a letter

dated at Constantinople, by which letter it appeareth, that the Great Turk prepareth a marvellous mighty army, and yet whither he will therewith, that can there yet no man tell. But I fear in good faith, uncle, that his voyage shall be hither. Howbeit, he that wrote the letter, saith that it is secretly said in Constantinople, that great part of his army shall be shipped and sent either into Naples, or into Sicily.

There be more
great Turkes
than one.

ANTONY.—It may fortune, cousin, that the letter of the Venetian dated at Constantinople, was devised at Venice. From thence come there some among, and sometime from Rome too, and sometime also from other places, letters all found full of such tidings, that the Turk is ready to do some great exploit. Which tidings they blow about for the furtherance of some such affairs, as they then have themselves in hand. The

Why nobelities
are sometimes
blown abroad.

Turk hath also so many men of arms in his retinue at his continual charge, that lest they should lie still and do nothing, but peradventure fall in devising of some novelties among themselves, he is fain yearly to make some assemblies and some changing of them from one place

unto another, and past time sort asunder, that they wax not over well acquainted by dwelling over long together. By these ways also he maketh those that he mindeth suddenly to invade indeed, the less to look therefor, and thereby the less preparation to make before, while they see him so many times make a great visage of war when he mindeth it not; but then at one time or other they suddenly feel it, when they fear it not. Howbeit, full likely, cousin, it is of very truth, that unto this realm of Hungary he will not fail to come. For neither is there any country through Christendom, that lieth for him so meet, nor never was there any time till now, in which he might so well and surely win it. For now call we him in ourself (God save us!) as Æsop telleth, that the sheep took in the wolf unto them, to keep them from the dogs.

Note the parabolic, and beware the wolf.

VINCENT.—Then are there very like, good uncle, all these tribulations to fall upon us here, that I spake of in the beginning of our first communication here the other day.

ANTONY.—Very truth it is, cousin, that so there will of likelihood in a while, but not forthwith all at the first. For while he cometh under the colour of aid for the one against the other, he will somewhat see the proof, before he fully shew himself. But in conclusion, if he be able to get it for him, you shall see him so handle it, that he shall not fail to get it from him, and that forthwith out of hand, ere ever he suffer him settle himself over sure therein.

This is the right practice at heretics.

VINCENT.—Yet say they, uncle, that he useth not to force any man to forsake his faith.

ANTONY.—Not any man, cousin? They say more than they can make good, that tell you so. He maketh a solemn oath among the ceremonies of that feast, in which he first taketh upon him his authority, that he shall, in all that he possibly may, minish the faith of Christ, and dilate the faith of Mahomet. But yet hath he not used to force every whole country at once to forsake their faith. For of some countries hath he been content only to take a tribute

The Turk's oath.

yearly, and let them live there as they list. Out of some he taketh the whole people away, dispersing them for slaves among many sundry countries of his, very far from their own, without any suffrance of regress. Some country so great and populous, that they cannot well be carried and conveyed thence, he destroyeth the gentlemen, and giveth their lands, part to such as he bringeth, and part to such as willingly will deny their faith, and keepeth the other in such misery, that they were in manner as good to be dead at once. In rest he suffereth also no Christian man almost, but those that resort as merchants, or those that offer themselves to serve him in his war.

*Made not other
Turks done all
the same too?*

But as for those Christian countries, that he useth not for only tributaries, as he doth Chio, Cyprus, or Candy, but reckoneth for clear conquest, and utterly taketh for his own, as Morea, Greece, and Macedonia, and such other like (and as I verily think, he will Hungary, if he get it), in all those useth he Christian people after sundry fashions. He letteth them dwell there indeed, because

*Why Chris-
tian Catholic
folk be spared
sometimes, and
in some coun-
tries.*

they were too many to carry all away, and too many to kill them all too; but if he should either leave the land dispeopled and desolate, or else some other countries of his own, from whence he should (which would not well be done) convey the people thither, to people that land withal: there, lo, those that will not be turned from their faith, of which God keepeth (lauded be his holy name!) very many, he suffereth to dwell still in peace. But yet is their peace for all that not very peaceable. For lands he suffereth them to have none of their own; office or honest room they bear none: with occasions of his wars he filleth them with taxes and tollages unto the bare bones, their children he chooseth where he list in their youth, and taketh them from their parents, conveying them whither he list, where their friends never see them after, and abuseth them as he list. Some young maids he maketh harlots, some young men he bringeth up in war, and some young children he causeth to be gelded, not their stones cut out, as the custom was of old,

but cutteth off their whole members by the body: how few scape and live, he little forceth; for he will have enough. And all that he so taketh young to any use of his own, are betaken unto such Turks or false renegades to keep, that they be turned from the faith of Christ every one, or else so handled, that as for this world they come to an evil chieving. For beside many other contumelies and despites that the Turks and the false renegade Christians many times do to good Christian people that still persevere and abide by the faith; they find the mean sometime to make some false shrews say, that they heard such a Christian man speak opprobrious words against Mahomet, and upon that point falsely testified, will they take occasion to compel him forsake the faith of Christ, and turn unto the profession of their shameful superstitious sect, or else will they put him to death with cruel intolerable torments.

Note this practice practised also now.

VINCENT.—Our Lord, uncle, for his mighty mercy keep those wretches hence! For by my troth, if they hap to come hither, methink I see many more tokens than one, that we shall have of our own folk here ready to fall in unto them. For like as before a great storm the sea beginneth sometime to work and roar in itself, ere ever the winds wax boisterous; so methink I hear at mine ear, some of our own here among us, which within these few years could no more have borne the name of a Turk, than the name of a devil, begin now to find little fault therein, yea and some to praise them too, little and little as they may, more glad to find fault, at every state of Christendom, priests, princes, rites, ceremonies, sacraments, laws, and customs, spiritual, and temporal, and all.

A good similitude.

The worst folk do most find, and least amend faults.

ANTONY.—In good faith, cousin, so begin we to fare here indeed, and that but even now of late. For since the title of the Crown hath come in question, the good rule of this realm hath very sore decayed, as little while as it is. And undoubtedly Hungary shall never do well, as long as it standeth in this case, that men's minds hearken after novelties, and have their

A deep point of wisdom for rulers to consider.

hearts hanging upon a change. And much the worse I like it, when their words walk so large toward the favour of the Turk's sect, which they were ever wont to have in so great abomination, as every true minded Christian man, and Christian woman too, must have. I am of such age as you see, and verily from as far as I can remember, it hath been marked and often proved true, that when children have in Buda fallen in a phantasy by themselves to draw together, and in their playing make as it were corpses carried to church, and sing after their childish fashion the tune of the *Dirige*, there hath great death there shortly followed after. And twice or thrice I may remember in my days, when children in divers parts of this realm have gathered themselves in sundry companies, and made, as it were, parties and battles, and after their battles in sport, wherein some children have yet taken great hurt, there hath fallen very battle and very deadly war indeed.

These tokens were somewhat like your ensample of the sea, sith they be (of things that after follow) tokens foregoing through some secret motion or instinct, whereof the cause is unknown. But by St. Mary! cousin, these

Note the like bold favour borne to the Turks in Flanders.

tokens like I much worse, these tokens, I say, not of children's plays, nor of children's songs, but old shrews' large open words, so boldly spoken in the favour of Mahomet's sect, in

this realm of Hungary that hath been ever hitherto a very sure key of Christendom. And out of doubt, if

Note well this point, and consider the sequel both in Turkish treachery, and in Protestants' practice and proceedings.

Hungary be lost, and that the Turk have it once fast in his possession, he shall ere it be long after, have an open ready way into almost the remnant of all Christendom: though he win it not all in a week, the great part will be won after, I fear me, within very few years.

VINCENT.—But yet evermore I trust in Christ, good uncle, that he shall not suffer that abominable sect of his mortal enemies in such wise to prevail against his Christian countries.

ANTONY.—That is very well said, cousin. Let us have our sure hope in him, and then shall we be very sure,

that we shall not be deceived. For either shall we have the thing that we hope for, or a better thing in the stead. For as for the thing itself that we pray for, and hope to have, God will not alway send us. And therefore, as I said in our first communication, in all thing (save only for heaven) our prayer nor our hope may never be too precise, although the thing be lawful to require. Verily if we people of the Christian nations were such, as would God we were! I would little fear all the preparations that the Great Turk could make; no nor yet being as bad as we be, I nothing doubt at all, but that in conclusion, how base soever Christendom be brought, it shall spring up again, till the time be come very near to the day of doom, whereof some tokens as methinketh are not come yet. But somewhat before that time shall Christendom

For all that
Turks and he-
retics can do,
Christendom
and Catholic
faith shall
spring up
again.

be straited sore, and brought into so narrow a compass, that according unto Christ's words, *Filius hominis veniens, putas, inveniet fidem in terra?*—When the Son of Man shall come again,* that is to wit, to the day of general judgment, weenest thou that he shall find faith in the earth? As who say, but a little. For as appeareth in the Apocalypse† and other places of Scripture,‡ the faith shall be at that time so far faded, that he shall for the love of his elect, lest they should fall and perish too, abridge those days and accelerate his coming. But, as I say, methink I miss yet in my mind some of those tokens that shall by the Scripture come a good while before that. And among other the coming of the Jews, and the dilating of Christendom again before the world come to that straight. So that, I say, for mine own mind, I little doubt, but that this ungracious sect of Mahomet shall have a foul fall, Christendom spring and spread, flower, and increase again.

Both Turks
and heretics
shall have a
fall at last.

Howbeit that pleasure and comfort shall they see, that shall be born after that we be buried (I fear me) both twain. For God giveth us great likelihood, that for our sinful wretched living, he goeth about to make these infidels, that are his

Turks and he-
retics are God's
scourge.

* Luc. xviii.

† Apocal. i.

‡ Matth. xxiv.

open professed enemies, the sorrowful scourge of correction over evil Christian people, that should be faithful, and of truth are his falsely professed friends. And surely, cousin, albeit that methinketh I see divers evil tokens of this misery coming to us, yet can there not in my mind be a worse prognostication thereof, than this ungracious token that you note here yourself. For undoubtedly, cousin, this new manner here of men's favourable fashion in their language toward these ungracious Turks, declareth plainly, that not only their minds giveth them, that hither in shall he come, but also that they can be content, both to live under him, and over that, from the true faith of Christ to fall into Mahomet's false abominable sect.

VINCENT.—Verily, my uncle, as I go more about than you, so must I needs more hear (which is an *An heaby hearing indeed.* heavy hearing in my ear) the manner of men in this matter, which increaseth about as here. I trust in other places of this realm by God's grace it is otherwise. But in this quarter here about us, many of these fellows that are met for the war, first were wont, as it were in sport, and in a while after half between game and earnest, and by our Lady! now not far from fair flat earnest indeed, talk as though they looked for a day, when with a turn unto the Turk's faith they should be made masters here of true Christian men's bodies, and owners of all their goods.

ANTONY.—Though I go little abroad, cousin, yet hear I sometime, when I say little, almost as much as that. But while there is no man to complain to for the redress, what remedy but patience, and fain to sit still, and hold my peace? For of these two that strive whether of them both shall reign upon us, and each of them calleth himself king, and both twain put the people to pain: the one is, you wot well, too far from our quarter here to help us in this behalf. And the other, while he looketh for the Turk's aid, either will not, or well dare not (I ween) find any fault with them that favour the Turk and his sect. For of Turks natural this country lacketh none now, which

*These Turks
habe had, and
have now their
day.*

*Mark what en-
surt, when
Christian
princes use
Turks' and
heretics' aid.*

are here conversant under diverse pretexts, and of every thing advertise the Great Turk full surely. And therefore, cousin, albeit that I would advise every man, pray still and call unto God to hold his gracious hand over us, and keep away this wretchedness, if his pleasure be : yet would I farther advise every good Christian body to remember and consider, that it is very likely to come, and therefore make his reckoning and cast his pennyworths before, and every man and every woman appoint with God's help in their own mind before hand, what thing they intend to do, if the very worst fall.

Good to foresee
and forecast the
worst.

CHAPTER I.

Whether a man should cast in his mind and appoint in his heart before, that if he were taken with Turks, he would rather die than forsake the faith.



INCENT. — WELL fare your heart, good uncle, for this good counsel of yours. For surely methinketh that this is marvellous good. But yet heard I once a right cunning and a very good man say, that it were great folly, and very perilous too, that a man should think upon any such thing, or imagine any such case in his mind, for fear of double peril that may follow thereupon. For either shall he be likely to answer himself to the case put by himself, that he will rather suffer any painful death, than forsake his faith, and by that bold appointment, should he fall in the fault of St. Peter* that of oversight made a proud promise, and soon had a foul fall; or else were he likely to think that rather than abide the pain, he would forsake God indeed, and by that mind should he sin deadly through his own folly, whereas he needeth not, as he that shall peradventure never come in the peril to be put thereunto. And that therefore it were most wisdom never to think upon any such manner case.

ANTONY.—I believe well, cousin, that you have heard some man that would so say. For I can shew almost as much as that left of a good man and a great solemn doctor in writing. But yet, cousin, although I should

* Johan. xiii. ; Luc. xxii.

hap to find one or two more, as good men and as learned too, that would both twain say and write the same, yet would I not fear for my part to counsel my friend to the contrary. For, One or two doctors' mind is not alway to be trusted. cousin, if his mind answer him, as St. Peter answered Christ, that he will rather die than forsake him, though he say therein more unto himself, than he should be per-adventure able to make good, if it came to the point, yet perceive I not that he doth in that thought any deadly displeasure unto God, nor St. Peter, though he said more than he did perform, yet in his so saying offended not God greatly neither. But his offence was, when he did not after so well, as he said before. But now may this man be likely never to fall in the peril of breaking that appointment, sith of some ten thousand that so shall examine themselves, never one shall fall in that peril, and yet to have that good purpose all their life, seemeth me no more harm the while, than a poor beggar that hath never a penny, to think that if he had great substance, he would give great alms for God's sake.

But now is all the peril, if the man answer himself, that he would in such case rather forsake the faith of Christ with his mouth, and keep it still in his heart, than for the confessing of it to endure a painful death. For by this mind falleth he in deadly sin, which while he never cometh in the case indeed, if he never had put himself the case he never had fallen in. But in good faith methinketh, that he which upon that case put unto himself by himself, will make himself that answer, hath the habit of faith so faint and so cold, that to the better knowledge of himself, and of his necessity to pray for more strength of grace, he had need Such cold and faint faith is too common now. to have the question put him, either by himself, or some other man.

Besides this, to counsel a man never to think on the case, is in my mind as much reason as the medicine that I have heard taught one for the tooth-ache, to go thrice about a churchyard, and never think A medicine for the tooth-ache. upon a fox-tail. For if the counsel be not given them, it cannot serve them; and if it be given them, it must put

that point of the matter in their mind, which by and by to reject, and think therein neither one thing or other, is a thing that may be sooner bidden than obeyed. I ween also that very few men can escape it, but that though they would never think thereon by themselves, yet in one place or other, where they shall hap to come in company, they shall have the question by adventure so proposed and put forth, that like as while he heareth one talking to him, he may well wink if he will but he cannot make himself sleep: so shall he, whether he will or no, think one thing or other therein.

Men think some time and cannot sleep.

Finally, when Christ spake so often and so plain of the matter, that every man should upon pain of damnation, openly confess his faith,* if men took him and by dread of death would drive him to the contrary; it seemeth me in a manner implied therein, that we be bound conditionally to have evermore that mind, actually sometime, and evermore habitually, that if the case so should fall, then, (with God's help), so we would. And where they find in the thinking thereon, their hearts agrieve, and shrink in the remembrance of the pain that their imagination representeth to the mind, then must they call to mind and remember the great pain and torment that Christ suffered for them, and heartily pray for grace that if the case should so fall, God should give them strength to stand. And thus with exercise of such meditation, though men should never stand full out of fear of falling, yet must they persevere in good hope, and in full purpose of standing.

If heretics think they must die for their faith, what must Christian Catholics think and do for theirs?

And this seemeth me, cousin, so far forth the mind, that every Christian man and woman must needs have, that methinketh that every curate should often counsel all his parishioners, and every man and woman, their servants and their children, even beginning in their tender youth, to know this point, and to think thereon, and little and little from their very childhood to accustom them dulcely and pleasantly in the meditation

Note this duty of curates and others.

* Matth. x. ; Luc. xii.

thereof, whereby the goodness of God shall not fail so to aspire the grace of his Holy Spirit into their hearts in reward of that virtuous diligence, that through such actual meditation, he shall confirm them in such a sure habit of spiritual faithful strength, that all the devils in hell with all the wrestling that they can make, shall never be able to wrest it out of their heart.

VINCENT.—By my troth, uncle, methinketh you say very well.

ANTONY.—I say surely, cousin, as I think. And yet all this have I said, concerning them that dwell in such places, as they be never like in their lives to come in the danger to be put to the proof. Howbeit many a man may ween himself farther therefrom, that yet may fortune by some one chance or other, to fall in the case that either for the truth of faith, or for the truth of justice (which go almost alike) he may fall in the case. But now be you and I, cousin, and all our friends here, far in another point. For we be so likely to fall in the experience thereof so soon, that it had been more time for us (all other things set aside) to have devised upon this matter, and firmly to have settled ourself upon a fast point long ago, than to begin to commune and counsel upon it now.

How many are now fallen in the case, yea and fallen too?

Persecution for faith or justice, much alike.

VINCENT.—In good faith, uncle, you say therein very truth, and would God it had come sooner in my mind; but better is yet late, than never. And I trust God shall yet give us respite and time, whereof, uncle, that we lose no part, I pray you proceed now with your good counsel therein.

ANTONY.—Very gladly, cousin, shall I now go forth in the fourth temptation, which only remaineth to be treated of, and properly pertaineth whole unto this present purpose.

CHAPTER II.

Of the fourth temptation, which is persecution for the faith, touched in these words of the prophet, Ab incursu et dæmonio meridiano.



This tempta-
tion most peril-
ous, etc.

THE fourth temptation, cousin, that the prophet speaketh of in the foreremembered psalm, *Qui habitat in adjutorio Altissimi*, &c. is plain open persecution, which is touched in these words, *Ab incursu et dæmonio meridiano*. And of all his temptations this is the most perilous, the most bitter, sharp, and most rigorous. For whereas in other temptations he useth either pleasant allectives unto sin, or other secret sleights and trains, and cometh in the night and stealeth on in the dark unaware, or in some other part of the day flieth and passeth by like an arrow, so shaping himself sometime in one fashion, sometime in another, and so dissimuling himself and his high mortal malice, that a man is thereby so blinded and beguiled, that he may not sometime perceive well what he is. In this temptation, this plain open persecution for the faith, he cometh even in the very mid-day, that is to wit, even upon them that have an high light of faith shining in their heart, and openly suffereth himself so plainly be perceived, by his fierce, furious, malicious persecution against the faithful Christian, for hatred of Christ's true Catholic faith, that no man having faith can doubt what he is. For in this temptation he sheweth himself such as the prophet nameth him, *Dæmonium meridianum*,—the midday devil:

Who seeth not
now the rage of
this furious
midday devil?

he may be so lightsomely seen with the eye of a faithful soul, by his fierce furious assault and incursion. For therefore saith the prophet, that the truth of God shall compass that man round about, that dwelleth in the faithful hope of his help with a pavice, *Ab incurso et dæmonio meridiano*,—from the incursion and the devil of the midday, because this kind of persecution is not a wily temptation, but a furious force and a terrible incursion.* In other of his temptations he stealeth on like a fox: but in this Turk's persecution for the faith he runneth on roaring with assault like a A ramping lion indeed. ramping lion.

This temptation is of all temptations also the most perilous. For whereas in temptations of prosperity, he useth only delectable allectives to move a man to sin, and in other kinds of tribulations and adversity he useth only grief and pain to pull a man into murmur, impatience, and blasphemy: in this kind of persecution for the faith of Christ he useth both twain, that is to wit, both his allectives of quiet and rest by deliverance from death and pain, with other pleasures also of this present life: and beside that, the terror and infliction of intolerable pain and torment. In other tribulation, as loss, or sickness, or death of our friends, though the pain be peradventure as great and sometime greater too; yet is not the peril nowhere nigh half so much. For in other tribulations, as I said before, the necessity that the man must of fine force abide and endure the pain, wax he never so wroth and impatient therewith, is a great reason and occasion to move him to keep his patience therein, and be content therewith, and thank God thereof, and of necessity to make a virtue that he may be rewarded for. But in this temptation, this persecution for the faith (I mean, not by fight in the field, by which the faithful man standeth at his defense, and putteth the faithless in half the fear, and half the harm too), but where he is taken and in hold, and may for the forswearing or the denying of his faith be delivered and suffer to live in rest, and sometime in great worldly wealth also: in this case, I say, this thing,

* 1 Pet. v.

that he needeth not to suffer this trouble and pain but he will, is a marvellous great occasion for him, to fall into the sin that the devil would drive him to, that is to wit, the forsaking of his faith. And therefore as I say, of all the devil's temptations is this temptation, this persecution for the faith, the most perilous.

VINCENT.—The more perilous, uncle, that this temptation is (as indeed of all temptations the most perilous it is) the more need have they that stand in peril thereof, to be before with substantial advice and good counsel well armed against it, that we may with the comfort and consolation thereof the better bear that tribulation when it cometh, and the better withstand the temptation.

ANTONY.—You say, cousin Vincent, therein very truth, and I am content to fall therefor in hand therewith. But forasmuch, cousin, as methinketh, that of this tribulation somewhat you be more frail than I, and of truth somewhat more excusable it is in you, than it were in me, my age considered, and the sorrow that I have suffered already with some other considerations on my part beside: rehearse you therefore the griefs and pains that you think in this tribulation possible to fall unto you: and I shall against each of them give you counsel and rehearse you such occasion of comfort and consolation, as my poor wit and learning can call to my mind.

VINCENT.—In good faith, uncle, I am not all thing afraid in this case only for myself, but well you wot I have cause to care also for many more, and that folk of sundry sorts men and women both, and that not all of one age.

ANTONY.—All that you have cause to fear for, cousin, for all them have I cause to fear with you too, sith all your kinsfolks and allies within a little be likewise unto me. Howbeit to say the truth, every man hath cause in this case to fear, both for himself and also for every other. For sith, as the Scripture saith, *Unicuique dedit Deus curam de proximo suo*,—God hath given every man cure and charge of his neighbour,* there is no man that hath any spark

A good care for
kinsfolk and
friends.

* Eccles. xvii.

of Christian love and charity in his breast, but that in a matter of such peril as this is, wherein the soul of man standeth in so great danger to be lost, he must needs care and take thought, not for his friends only, but also for his very foes. We shall therefore, cousin, not rehearse your harms or mine that may befall in this persecution, but all the great harms in general, as near as we can call to mind, that may hap unto any man.

Ⓢ how charitably said.

CHAPTER III.



ITH a man is made of the body and the soul, all the harm that any man may take, it must needs be in one of these two; either immediately, or by the mean of some such thing as serveth for the pleasure, weal, or commodity of the one of these two.

As for the soul, first we shall need no rehearsal of any harm, that by this kind tribulation may attain thereto: but if that by some inordinate love and affection that

*The harm of
the soul.*

the soul bear to the body, she consent to slide from the faith, and thereby do her harm herself. Now remain there the body, and these outward things of fortune, which serve for the maintenance of the body, and minister matter of pleasure to the soul also, through the delight that she hath in the body, for the while that she is matched therewith. Consider then first the loss of these outward things, as somewhat the less in weight, than is the body itself. In them what may a man lose, and thereby what pain may he suffer?

*All these losses
and harms men
have and suffer
now.*

VINCENT.—He may lose, uncle (of which I should somewhat lose myself), money, plate, and other moveable substance. Those offices, authority, and finally all the lands of his inheritance for ever, that himself and his heirs perpetually might else enjoy. And of all these things, uncle, you wot well, that myself have some, little in respect of that that some other have here, but somewhat more yet, than he that hath most here would be well content to lose. Upon the loss of these things follow neediness and poverty, the pain of lacking, the shame of begging: of which twain I wot not well which is the most wretched necessity, be-

side the grief and heaviness of heart in beholding good men and faithful, and his dear friends, bewrapped in like misery, and ungracious wretches and infidels, and his most mortal enemies, enjoy the commodities that himself and his friends have lost. Now for the body very few words shall serve us. For therein I see none other harm but loss of liberty, labour, imprisonment, painful and shameful death.

ANTONY. — There needeth not much more, cousin, as the world is now. For I fear me that less than a fourth part of this will make many a man so stagger in his faith, and some man fall quite therefrom, that yet at this day, before he come to the proof, weeneth himself that he would stand very fast. And I beseech our Lord, that all they that so think, and would yet, when they were brought to the point, fall therefrom for fear or for pain, may get of God the grace to ween still as they do, and not to be brought to the assay, where pain or fear should shew them then (as it shewed St. Peter*) how far they be deceived now. But now, cousin, against these terrible things, what way shall we take in giving men counsel or comfort?

If the faith were in our days as fervent as it hath been ere this in times past, little counsel and little comfort would suffice. We should not much need with words and reasoning to extenuate and minish the vigour and asperity of the pains; but the greater, the more bitter that the passion were, the more ready was of old time the fervour of faith to suffer it. And surely, cousin, I doubt it little in my mind, but that if a man had in his heart so deep a desire and love, longing to be with God in heaven, to have the fruition of his glorious face, as had these holy men that were martyrs in the old time, he would no more now stick at the pain that he must pass between, than at that time those old holy martyrs did. But alas! our faint and feeble faith with our love to God, less than lukewarm, by the fiery affection that we bear to our own filthy flesh, maketh us so dull in the desire of

*How true is
this tried now?*

*The fervent
faith of old
time.*

*The faint and
feeble faith
now.*

* Luc. xxii.

heaven that the sudden dread of every bodily pain woundeth us to the heart, and striketh our devotion stark dead. And therefore doth there every man, cousin (as I said before), much the more need to think upon this thing many a time and oft aforehand, ere any such peril fall : and by much devising thereupon, before they see the cause to fear it, while the thing shall not appear so terrible unto them, reason shall better enter, and through grace working with their diligence, engender and set sure, not a sudden slight affection of suffrance for God's sake, but by a long continuance a strong deep-rooted habit, not like a reed ready to wave with every wind, nor like a rootless tree, scant set up on end, in a loose heap of light sand, that will with a blast or two be blown down.

CHAPTER IV.



OR if we now consider, cousin, these causes of terror and dread that you have recited, which in his persecution for the Faith this midday devil may by these Turks rear against us, to make his incursion with : we shall well perceive, weighing them well with reason, that albeit somewhat they be indeed, yet every part of the matter pondered, they shall well appear in conclusion things nothing so much to be dread and fled from, as to folk at the first sight they do suddenly seem.

CHAPTER V.

Of the loss of the goods of fortune

FOR first to begin at these outward goods, that neither are the proper goods of the soul, nor of the body, but are called the goods of fortune, that serve for the sustenance and commodity of man for the short season of this present life, as worldly substance, offices, honour, and authority, what great good is there in these things of themselves, for which they were worthy so much as to bear the name, by which the world of a worldly favour customably calleth them? For if the having of strength make a man strong, and the having of heat make a man hot, and the having of virtue make a man virtuous: how can these things be verily and truly good, which he that hath them, may by the having of them as well be the worse as the better, and (as experience proveth) more often is the worse than the better? When should a good man greatly rejoice in that, that he daily seeth most abound in the hands of many that be nought? Do not now this great Turk and his bassas in all these advancements of fortune, surmount very far above any Christian estate, and any lords living under him? And was there not yet hence upon a twenty year ago, the great Soudan of Syria, which many a year together bare as great a part as the great Turk, and after in one summer unto the great Turk that whole empire was lost? And so may all his empire now, and shall hereafter by

The goods of fortune.

What great Turkish bassas do mount aloft now!

God send once
that day ! God's grace be lost unto Christian men's
hands likewise, when Christian people shall be
mended, and grow into God's favour again. But when
that whole kingdom and mighty great empires are of so
little surety to stand, and be so soon translated from one
man unto another; what great thing can you or I, yea,
or any lord the greatest in this land, reckon himself to
have by the possession of an heap of silver or gold, white
and yellow metal, not so profitable of their own nature
(save for a little glistening) as the rude rusty metal of
iron?

CHAPTER VI.

Of the unsurety of lands and possessions.



LANDS and possessions many men yet much more esteem than money, because the lands seem not so casual as money is or plate, for that though their other substance may be stolen and taken away, yet evermore they think that their land will lie still where it lay. But what are we the better, that our land cannot be stirred, but will lie still where it lay, while ourself may be removed, and not suffered to come near it? What great difference is there to us, whether our substance be moveable or immoveable, sith we be so moveable ourself, that we may be removed from them both, and lose them both twain, saving that sometime in the money is the surety somewhat more. For when we be fain ourself to flee, we may make shift to carry some of our money with us, where of our land we cannot carry one inch. If our land be a thing of more surety than our money, how happeth it then, that in this persecution, we be more fraid to lose it? For if it be a thing of more surety, then can it not soon be lost. In the translation of these two great empires, Greece first, sith myself was born, and after, Syria, since you were born too, the land was lost before the money was found.

Land and possessions.

Money better than land sometime.

Oh! cousin Vincent, if the whole world were animated with a reasonable soul, as Plato had weened it were, and that it had wit and understanding to

A proper fiction.

mark and perceive all thing : Lord God ! how the ground, on which a prince buildeth his palace, would loud laugh his lord to scorn, when he saw him proud of his possession, and heard him boast himself that he and his blood are for ever the very lords and owners of that land ! For then would the ground think the while in himself : Oh, thou silly poor soul, that weenest thou were half a god, and art amid thy glory but a man in a gay gown : I that am the ground here, over whom thou art so proud, have had an hundred such owners of me as thou callest thyself, more than ever thou hast heard the names of. And Landed men's state. some of them that proudly went over my head, lie now low in my belly, and my side lieth over them : and many one shall, as thou doest now, call himself mine owner after thee, that neither shall be sib to thy blood, nor any word bear of thy name. Who aught your castle, cousin, three thousand years ago ?

VINCENT.—Three thousand, uncle ! Nay, nay, in anything Christian, or heathen, you may strike off a third part of that well enough, and as far as I ween half of the remnant too. In far fewer years than three thousand it may well fortune, that a poor ploughman's blood may come up to a kingdom, and a king's right royal kin on the other side fall down to the plough and cart : and neither that king know that ever he came from the cart, nor that carter know that ever he came from the crown.

This case hath fallen to some kings and to many gentle-men.

ANTONY.—We find, cousin Vincent, in full authentic stories, many strange chances as marvellous as that, come about in the compass of very few years in effect. And be such things then in reason so greatly to be set by, that we should esteem the loss so great, when we see that in the keeping our surety is so little ?

VINCENT.—Marry, uncle, but the less surety that we have to keep it, sith it is a great commodity to have it, the fearder by so much, and the more loth we be to forego it.

ANTONY.—That reason shall I, cousin, turn against yourself. For if it be so, as you say, that sith the things be commodious, the less surety that you see you have of

the keeping, the more cause you have to be afraid of the losing; then on the other side, the more that a thing is of his nature such, that the commodity thereof bringeth a man little surety, and much fear, that thing of reason the less have we cause to love. And then the less cause that we have to love a thing, the less cause have we to care therefor, or fear the loss thereof, or be loth to go therefrom.

CHAPTER VII.

These outward goods or gifts of fortune are two manner wise to be considered.



E shall yet, cousin, consider in these outward goods of fortune, as riches, good name, honest estimation, honourable fame and authority: in all these things we shall, I say, consider, that either we love them and set by them, as by things commodious unto us for the state and condition of this present life, or else as things that we purpose by the good use thereof to make them matter of our merit with God's help in the life after to come. Let us then first consider them as things set by and beloved for the pleasure and commodity of them for this present life.

CHAPTER VIII.

The little commodity of riches being set by, but for this present life.



OW riches loved and set by for such, if we consider it well, the commodity that we take thereof is not so great, as our own fond affection and phantasy maketh us imagine it. It maketh us, I say not nay, go much more gay and glorious in sight, garnished with silk, but cloth is within a

Gay apparel.

little as warm. It maketh us have great plenty of many kind of delicate and delicious victual, and thereby to make more excess. But less exquisite,

Delicate fare.

and less superfluous fare, with fewer surfeits and fewer fevers growing thereon to, were within a little as wholesome. Then the labour in the getting, the fear in the keeping, the pain in the parting from, do more than counterpoise a great part of all the pleasure and commodity that they bring. Besides this, the riches is the thing that taketh many times from his master, all his pleasure and his life too. For many a man is for his riches slain, and some that keep their riches as a thing pleasant and commodious for their life, take none other pleasure in a manner thereof in all their life, than as though they bare the key of another man's coffer, and rather are content to live in neediness miserably all their

*Hoards and
hiders of money.*

days, than they could find in their heart to minish their hoard, they have such phantasy to look thereon. Yea and some men for fear lest thieves

should steal it from them, be their own thieves and steal it from themselves, while they dare not so much as let it lie where themselves may look thereon, but put it in a pot, and hide it in the ground, and there let it lie safe till they die, and sometime seven year after. From which place if the pot had been stolen away five year before his death, all the same five year that he lived after, weening alway that his pot lay safe still, what had he been the poorer, while he never occupied it after?

VINCENT.—By my troth, uncle, not one penny, for aught that I perceive.

CHAPTER IX.

The little commodity of fame being desired but for worldly pleasures.



ANTONY.—LET us now consider good name, honest estimation, and honourable fame. For these three things are of their own nature one, and take their difference, in effect, but of the manner of the common speech in diversity of degrees. For a good

A good name.

name may a man have, be he never so poor.

Honest estimation.

Honest estimation in the common taking of the people belongeth not unto any man but him

that is taken for one of some countenance and behaviour, and among his neighbours had in some reputation. In

Honourable fame.

the word of honourable fame, folk conceive the renown of great estates, much and far

spoken of by reason of their laudable acres. Now all this gear used as a thing pleasant and commodious for this present life, pleasant it may seem to him that fasteneth his phantasy therein, but of the nature of the thing itself, I perceive no great commodity that it hath. I say, of the nature of the thing itself; because it may be by chance some occasion of commodity, as if it hap that for the good name the poor man hath, as for the honest estimation that a man of some haviour and substance standeth in among his neighbours, or for the honourable fame wherewith the great estate is renowned, if it hap, I say, that any man bearing them better, will therefore do them therefor any good. And yet as for that, like as it may sometime so hap (and sometime so happeth it indeed) so

may it hap sometime on the other side (and on the other side so it sometime happeth indeed) that such folk are of some other envied and hated, and as readily by them that envy them and hate them take harm, as they take by them that love them, good. Envy and hate follow fame.

But now to speak of the thing itself in his own proper nature, what is it but a blast of another man's mouth, as soon passed, as spoken? Whereupon he that setteth his delight, feedeth himself but with wind, whereof be he never so full, he hath little substance therein: and many times shall he much deceive himself. For he shall ween that many praise him, that never speak word of him, and they that do, say yet much less than he weeneth, and far more seldom too. For they spend not all the day, he may be sure, in talking of him alone, and whoso commend him most, will yet, I ween, in every four and twenty hours, wink and forget him at once. Besides this, that while one talketh well of him in one place, another sitteth and sayeth as shrewdly of him in another; and finally some that most praise him in his presence, behind his back mock him as fast, and loud laugh him to scorn, and sometime slily to his own face too. And yet are there some fools so fed with this fond phantasy of fame, Oh glorious fools. that they rejoyce and glory to think how they be continually praised all about, as though all the world did nothing else day nor night but ever sit and sing, *Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus*, upon them.

CHAPTER X.

Of Flattery.

AND unto this pleasant phrenzy of much foolish vain-glory, be there some men brought sometime by such as themselves do in a manner hire to flatter them; and would not be content if a man should do otherwise, but would be right angry, not only if a man told them truth when they do nought indeed, but also if they praise it but slenderly.

VINCENT.—Forsooth, uncle, this is very truth. I have been ere this, not very long ago, where I saw so proper experience of this point, that I must stop your tale for so long, while I tell you mine.

ANTONY.—I pray you, cousin, tell on.

VINCENT.—When I was first in Almaine, uncle, it happed me to be somewhat favoured with a great man of the church, and a great state, one of the greatest in all that country there. And indeed whosoever might spend as much as he might in one thing and other, were a right great state in any country of Christendom. But glorious was he very far above all measure, and that was great pity, for it did harm, and made him abuse many great gifts that God had given him. Never was he satiate of hearing his own praise. So happed it one day, that he had in a great audience, made an oration in a certain manner, wherein he liked himself so well, that at his dinner he sat him thought on thorns, till he might hear how they that sat

A notable example of flattery.

with him at his board, would commend it. And when he had sitten musing a while, devising (as I thought after) on some pretty proper way, to bring it in withal; at last, for lack of a better (lest he should have letted the matter too long) he brought it even bluntly forth, and asked us all that set at his board's end (for at his own mess in the midst there set but himself alone), how well we liked his oration that he had made that day. But in faith, uncle, when that problem was once proposed, till it was full answered, no man I ween eat one morsel of meat more: every man was fallen in so deep a study, for the finding of some exquisite praise. For he that should have brought out but a vulgar and common commendation, would have thought himself shamed for ever.

Then said we our sentences by row as we sat, from the lowest unto the highest in good order, as it had been a great matter of the common weal in a right solemn council. When it came to my part (I will not say it for no boast, uncle), methought, by our Lady! for my part I quit myself pretty well. And I liked myself the better, because methought my words (being but a stranger) went yet with some grace in the Almaigne tongue, wherein, letting my Latin alone, me listed to shew my cunning. And I hoped to be liked the better, because I saw that he that sat next me, and should say his sentence after me, was an unlearned priest: for he could speak no Latin at all. But when he came forth for his part with my lord's commendation, the wily fox had been so well accustomed in court with the craft of flattery, that Flattery accustomed in court. he went beyond me too far. And then might I see by him, what excellency a right mean wit may come to in one craft, that in all his whole life studieth and busieth his wit about no more but that one. But I made after a solemn vow to myself, that if ever he and I were matched together at that board again, when we should fall to our flattery I would flatter in Latin, that he should not contend with me no more. For though I could be content to be outrun of a horse, yet would I no more abide it to be outrun of an ass. But, uncle, here began now the game: he that sat highest, and was to speak the last,

was a great beneficed man, and not a doctor only, but also somewhat learned indeed in the laws of the church. A world it was to see, how he marked every man's word that spake before him, and it seemed that every word, the more proper that it was the worse he liked it, for the cumbrance that he had to study out a better to pass it. The man even sweat with the labour, so that he was fain in the while now and then to wipe his face. Howbeit in conclusion, when it came to his course, we that had spoken before him, had so taken all up among us before, that we had not left him one wise word to speak after.

ANTONY.—Alas ! good man, among so many of you, some good fellow should have lent him one.

VINCENT.—It needed not, as hap was, uncle, for he found out such a shift, that in his flattering he passed us all the many.

ANTONY.—Why, what said he, cousin ?

VINCENT.—By our Lady ! uncle, not one word. But like, as I trow, Plinius telleth,* that when Timanthes, the painter, in the table that he painted of the sacrifice and the death of Iphigenia, had in the making of the sorrowful countenances of the other noblemen of Greece that beheld it, spent out so much of his craft and his cunning, that when he came to make the countenance of king Agamemnon her father, which he reserved for the last, lest if he had made his visage before, he must in some of the other after, either have made the visage less dolorous than he could, and thereby have forborne some part of his praise, or doing the uttermost of his craft, might have happed to make some other look more heavily for the pity of her pain than her own father, which had been yet a far greater fault in his painting, when he come, I say, to the making of his face therefore last of all, he could devise no manner of new heavy cheer and countenance for her father, but that he had made there already in some of the other a much more heavy before, and therefore to the intent that no man should see what manner countenance it was that her father had, the painter was fain to paint him, holding his face in his handkercher : the like

* Natural. Hist. lib. 35, cap. 10.

pageant in a manner played us here this good ancient honourable flatterer. For when he saw that he could find no word of praise that would pass all that had been spoken before already, the wily fox would speak never a word, but as he were ravished unto heavenward with the wonder of the wisdom and eloquence that my lord's grace had uttered in that oration, he fet a long sigh with an oh! from the bottom of his breast, and held up both his hands, and lifted up his head, and cast both his eyes up into the welkin, and wept.

*Flattery well
assembled to
painting.*

ANTONY.—Forsooth, cousin, he played his part very properly. But was that great prelate's oration any thing praiseworthy? For you can tell, I see, well. For you would not, I ween, play as Juvenal* merrily describeth the blind senator, one of the flatterers of Tiberius the emperor, that among the remnant so magnified the great fish that the emperor had sent for them to shew them, which this blind senator (Montanus, I trow, they called him), marvelled of as much as any that marvelled most: and many things he spake thereof, with some of his words directed thereunto, looking himself toward the left side, while the fish lay on his right side: you would not, I trow, cousin, have taken upon you to praise it so, but if you had heard it.

Montanus.

VINCENT.—I heard it, uncle, indeed, and to say the truth it was not to dispraise. Howbeit surely somewhat less praise might have served it, by more a great deal than the half. But this am I sure, had it been the worst that ever was made, the praise had not been the less of one here. For they that used to praise him to his face, never considered how much the thing deserved, but how great a laud and praise themself could give his good grace.

ANTONY.—Surely, cousin, as Terence saith,† such folks make men of fools even stark mad, and much cause have their lords to be right angry with them.

VINCENT.—God hath indeed, and is, I ween: but as for their lords, uncle, if they would after wax angry with them therefor, they should in my mind do them very great

* Satyr. 4.

† In Eunuch.

wrong, when it is one of the things that they specially keep them for. For those that are of such vainglorious mind (be they lords, or be they meaner men) can be much better content to have their devices commended, then amended; and require they their servants and their friend never so specially to tell them the very truth, yet shall he better please them if he speak them fair, than if he tell them truth. For they be in the case that Martial speaketh of, in an epigram unto a friend of his that required his judgment, how he liked his verses, but he prayed him in any wise, to tell him even the very truth. To whom Martial * made answer in this wise:—

Flatterers kept
and fed for the
nonce.

“The very truth of me thou dost require.
The very truth is this, my friend dear,
The very truth thou wouldst not gladly hear.”

And in good faith, uncle, the selfsame prelate that I told you my tale of, I dare be bold to swear it (I know it so surely) had on a time made of his own drawing a certain treaty, that should serve for a league between that country and a great prince. In which treaty, himself thought that he had devised his articles so wisely, and indited them so well, that all the world would allow them. Whereupon longing sore to be praised, he called unto him a friend of his, a man well learned, and of good worship, and very well expert in those matters, as he that had been divers times ambassador for that country, and had made many such treaties himself. When he took him the treaty, and that he had read it, he asked him how he liked it, and said: But I pray you heartily tell me the very truth. And that he spake so heartily, that the tother had weened he would fain have heard the truth, and in trust thereof he told him a fault therein. At the hearing whereof, he swore in great anger, By the mass! thou art a very fool. The other afterward told me, that he would never tell him truth again.

Another
example.

ANTONY.—Without question, cousin, I cannot greatly blame him: and thus themselves make every man mock

* Martialis, lib. 8, ad Gallicum.

them, flatter them, and deceive them : those, I say, that are of such vainglorious mind. For if they be content to bear the truth, let them then make much of those that tell them the truth, and withdraw their care from them that falsely flatter them, and they shall be more truly served than with twenty requests, praying men to tell them truth. King Ladislaus, our Lord assoil his soul, used much this manner among his servants. Ladislaus. When any of them praised any deed of his, or any condition in him, if he perceived that they said but the truth, he would let it pass by uncontrolled. But when he saw that they set to a gloss upon it for his praise of their own making beside, then would he shortly say unto them : “ I pray thee, good fellow, when thou sayest grace at my board, never bring in *Gloria Patri* without a *sicut erat* ; that is to wit, even as it was, and none otherwise : and lift me not up with no lies, for I love it not.” Gloria Patri with a sicut erat. If men would use this way with them, that this noble king used, it would minish much of their false flattery.

I can well allow, that men should commend (keeping them within the bounds of truth) such things as they see praiseworthy in other men, to give them the greater courage to the increase thereof. Lawful praising. For men keep still in that point one condition of children, that praise must prick them forth ; but better it were to do well, and look for none. Howbeit, they that cannot find in their heart to commend another man’s good deed, shew themselves either envious, or else of nature very cold and dull. But out of question, he that putteth his pleasure in the praise of the people hath but a fond phantasy. For if his finger do but ache of an hot blain, a great many men’s mouths blowing out his praise, will scantily do him among them all half so much ease, as to have one little boy to blow upon his finger.

CHAPTER XI.

The little commodity that men have of rooms, offices, and authority, if they desire them but for their worldly commodity.



Offices and
rooms.

ET us now consider in likewise, what great worldly wealth ariseth unto men by great offices, rooms, and authority: to those worldly-disposed people, I say that desire them for no better purpose. For of them that desire them for better, we shall speak after anon. The great thing that they chief like all therein, is that they may bear a rule, command and control other men, and live uncommanded and uncontrolled themselves. And yet this commodity took I so little heed of, that I never was ware it was so great, till a good friend of ours merrily told me once, that his wife once in a great anger taught it him. For when her husband had no list to grow greatly upward in the world, nor neither would labour for office of authority, and over that forsook a right worshipful room when it was offered him, she fell in hand with him (he told me) and all to rated him, and asked him; "What will you do, that you list not to put forth yourself, as other folks do? Will you sit still by the fire, and make goslings in the ashes with a stick, as children do? Would God I were a man, and look what I would do!" "Why, wife," quoth her husband, "what would you do?" "What? By God! go forward with the best of them. For, as my mother was wont to say (God have mercy on

her soul !) it is ever better to rule, than to be ruled. And therefore by God ! I would not, I warrant you, ~~as women love~~ ^{rule.} be so foolish to be ruled where I might rule.”
 “ By my troth, wife,” quoth her husband, “ in this, I dare say, you say truth. For I never found you willing to be ruled yet.”

VINCENT.—Well, uncle, I wot where you be now well enough. She is indeed a stout master woman: and in good faith for aught that I can see, ^{Ambition is indeed but womanish.} even that same womanish mind of hers is the greatest commodity that men reckon upon, in rooms and offices of authority.

ANTONY.—By my troth and methinketh very few there are of them that attain any great commodity therein. For first there is in every kingdom but one that can have an office of such authority, that no man may command him or control him. No officer can there ^{Commander's commodities.} stand in that case, but the king himself, which only uncontrolled or uncommanded, may control and command all. Now of all the remnant, each is under him : and yet beside him almost every one is under more commanders and comptrollers too, than one. And some man that is in a great office, commandeth fewer things and less labour to many men that are under him, than some one, that is over him, commandeth him alone.

VINCENT.—Yet it doth them good, uncle, that men must make courtesy to them, and salute them with reverence, and stand barehead before him, or to some of them kneel peradventure too.

ANTONY.—Well, cousin, in some part they do but play at gleek, receive reverence, and to their cost pay honour again therefor. For except, as I said, only a king, the greatest in authority under him, receiveth not so much reverence of no man, as according to reason himself doth honour to him. Nor twenty men's courtesies do him not so much pleasure as his own once kneeling doth him pain, if his knee hap to be sore. And I wist once a great officer of the king's say (and in good faith, I ween, he said but as he thought) that twenty men standing barehead before him, kept not his head half so warm, as to

keep on his own cap. Nor he never took so much ease with their being barehead before him, as he caught once grief with a cough that came upon him, by standing barehead long before the king.

But let it be, that these commodities be somewhat such as they be, yet then consider whether that any incommodities be so joined therewith, that a man were almost as good lack both, as have both. Commanders' commodities. Goeth all thing evermore as every one of them would have it? That were as hard as to please all the people at once with one weather, while in one house the husband would have fair weather for his corn, and his wife would have rain for her leeks. So while they that are in authority be not all evermore of one mind, but sometime variance among them, either for the respect of profit, or for contention of rule, or for maintenance of matters, sundry parts for their sundry friends: it cannot be that both the parts can have their own mind, nor often are they content which see their conclusion quail, but ten times they take the missing of their mind more displeasantly than other poor men do. And this goeth not only to men of mean authority, but unto the very greatest. The princes themself cannot have, you wot well, all their will. For how were it possible, while each of them almost would, if he might, be lord over the remnant? Then many men under their princes in authority are in the case, that privy malice and envy many bear them in heart, that Privy malice in courts. falsely speak them fair, and praise them with their mouths, which when there happeth any great fall unto them, bawl, and bark, and bite upon them like dogs.

Finally, the cost and charge, the danger and peril of war, wherein their part is more than a poor man's is, sith the matter more dependeth upon them, and many a poor ploughman may sit still by the fire, while they must rise and walk. And sometime their authority falleth by change of their master's mind: and of that see we daily in one place or other ensamples such, and so many, that the parable of the philosopher can lack no testimony, which likened the servants of great princes unto the counters with which men do

Princes' servants be but counters.

cast a count. For like as the counter that standeth sometime for a farthing, is suddenly set up and standeth for a thousand pound, and after as soon set down, and eftsoon beneath to stand for a farthing again: so fareth it, lo! sometime with those that seek the way to rise and grow up in authority, by the favour of great princes, that as they rise up high, so fall down again as Who is up aloft now? low.

Howbeit, though a man escape all such adventures, and abide in great authority till he die, yet then at the leastwise every man must leave at the last: and that which we call at last, hath no very long time to it. Let a man reckon his years that are passed of his age, ere ever he can get up aloft; and let him when he hath it A sure reckoning. first in his fist, reckon how long he shall be like to live after, and I ween, that then the most part shall have little cause to rejoyce, they shall see the time likely to be so short that their honour and authority by nature shall endure, beside the manifold chances whereby they may lose it more soon. And then when they see that they must needs leave it, the thing which they did much more set their heart upon, than ever they had reasonable cause: what sorrow they take therefor, that shall I not need to tell you.

And thus it seemeth unto me, cousin, in good faith, that sith in the having the profit is not great, and the displeasures neither small nor few, and of the losing so many sundry chances, and that by no mean a man can keep it long, and that to part therefrom is such a painful grief: I can see no very great cause, for which, as an high worldly commodity, men should greatly desire it.

CHAPTER XII.

That these outward goods desired but for worldly wealth, be not only little good for the body, but are also much harm for the soul.



AND thus far have we considered hitherto, in these outward goods that are called the gifts of fortune, no farther but the slender commodity that worldly-minded men have by them. But now if we consider farther what harm to the soul they take by them that desire them but only for the wretched wealth of this world: then shall we well perceive, how far more happy is he that well loseth them, than he that evil findeth them.

These things though they be such, as are of their own nature indifferent, that is to wit, of themselves, things neither good nor bad, but are matter that may serve to the one or the other, after as men will use them: yet need we little to doubt it, but that they that desire them but for their worldly pleasure, and for no farther godly purpose, the devil shall soon turn them from things indifferent unto them, and make them things very nought. For

Things indiffe-
rent be not so
in use.

though that they be indifferent of their nature, yet cannot the use of them lightly stand indifferent, but determinately must either be good or bad. And therefore he that desireth them but for worldly pleasure, desireth them not for any good. And for better purpose than he desireth them, to better use is he not likely to put them: and therefore not unto good, but consequently to naught.

As for ensample, first consider it in riches: he that longeth for them, as for things of temporal commodity, and not for any godly purpose, what good they shall do him St. Paul declareth, where he writeth unto Timothy:—*Qui volunt divites fieri, incidunt in tentationem, et in laqueum diaboli, et desideria multa inutilia et nociva, quæ mergunt homines in interitum et perditionem,*—They that long to be rich, fall into temptation, and into the grin of the devil, and into many desires unprofitable and noyous, which drown men into death and perdition.* And the Holy Scripture saith also in the book of the Proverbs: *Qui congregat thesauros, impingetur ad laqueos mortis,*—He that gathereth treasure, shall be shoved into the grins of death.† So that whereas by the mouth of St. Paul God saith, that they shall fall into the devil's grin, he saith in the tother place, that they shall be pushed and shoved in by violence. And of truth, while a man desireth riches not for any good godly purpose, but for only worldly wealth, it must needs be, that he shall have little conscience in the getting, but by all evil ways that he can invent, shall labour to get them. And then shall he either niggardly heap them up together, which is (you wot well) damnable, or wastefully misspend them about worldly pomp, pride, and gluttony, with occasion of many sins more, and that is yet much more damnable.

As for fame and glory desired but for worldly pleasure, doth unto the soul inestimable harm. For that setteth men's hearts upon high devices and desires of such things as are immoderate and outrageous, and by the help of false flatteries puff up a man in pride, and make a brittle man lately made of earth, and that shall again shortly be laid full low in earth, and there lie and rot, and turn again into earth, take himself in the meantime for a god here upon earth, and ween to win himself to be lord of all the earth. This maketh battles between these great princes, and with much trouble to much people and great effusion of blood, one king to look to reign in five realms, that cannot well rule one. For how many hath now this great

See these
earthly goods
now.

The root of
wars.

* 1 Tim. vi.

† Cap. xxi.

Turk, and yet aspireth to more? And those that he hath, he ordereth evil, and yet himself worse.

These offices and rooms of authority, if men desire them only for their worldly phantasies, who can look that ever they shall occupy them well, but abuse their authority, and do thereby great hurt? For then shall they fall from indifferency, and maintain false matters of their friends, bear up their servants and such as Bearing and bolstering. depend upon them, with bearing down of other innocent folk, not so able to do hurt, as easy to take harm.

Abusing of laws. Then the laws that are made against malefactors shall they make as an old philosopher said, to be much like unto cobwebs, in which the little gnats and flies stick still and hang fast, but the great bumble bees break them and fly quite through. And then the laws that are made as a buckler in the defence of innocents, those shall they make serve for a sword to cut and sore wound them with, and therewith wound they their own souls sorer. And thus you see, cousin, that of all these outward goods, which men call the goods of fortune, there is never one that unto them which long therefor, not for any godly purpose but only for their worldly wealth, hath any great commodity to the body, and yet are they all in such case (besides that) very deadly destruction unto the soul.

CHAPTER XIII.

Whether men desire these outward goods for their only worldly wealth, or for any good virtuous purpose, this persecution of the Turk against the faith will declare, and the comfort that both twain may take in the losing them thus.



INCENT.—VERILY, good uncle, this thing is so plainly true, that no man may with any good reason deny it, and I ween, uncle, also, that there will be no man say nay. For I see no man that will for very shame confess, that he desireth riches, honour, and renown, offices and rooms of authority, for his own worldly pleasure. For every man would fain seem as holy as a horse. And therefore will every man say, and would it were so believed too, that he desireth these things (though for his worldly wealth a little so) yet principally to merit thereby through doing some good therewith.

Each man
would seem
holy.

ANTONY.—This is, cousin, very sure so, that so doth every man say. But first he that in the desire thereof hath his respect therein unto his worldly wealth (as you say) but a little so, so much (as himself weeneth were but a little) may soon prove a great deal too much. And many men will say so too, that have indeed their principal respect unto their worldly commodity, and unto godward therein little or nothing at all. And yet they pretend the contrary, and that unto their own harm, *Quia Deus non irridetur*,—God cannot

Very true.

be mocked.* And some peradventure know not well their own affection themselves, but there lieth more imperfection secrete in their affection than themselves are well ware of, which only God beholdeth. And therefore saith the prophet unto God, *Imperfectum meum viderunt oculi tui*,—Mine imperfection have thine eyes beholden.† For which the prophet prayeth, *Ab occultis meis munda me, Domine*,—From my hid sins cleanse thou me, good Lord.‡

But now, cousin, this tribulation of the Turk, if he so persecute us for the faith, that those that will forsake their faith shall keep their goods, and those shall lose their goods that will not leave their faith: this manner of persecution, lo, shall like a touchstone try them, and shew the feigned from the true-minded, and teach also them, that ween they mean better than they do indeed, better to discern themselves. For some there are that ween they mean well, while they frame themselves a conscience, and ever keep still a great heap of superfluous substance by them, thinking ever still that they will bethink themselves upon some good deed, whereon they will well bestow it once, or else their executors shall. But now if they lie not unto themselves, but keep their goods for any good purpose to the pleasure of God indeed, then shall they in this persecution for the pleasure of God, in the keeping of his faith, be glad to depart from them.

And therefore as for all those things, the loss, I mean, of all those outward things that men call the gifts of fortune, this is methinketh in this Turk's persecution for the faith, consolation great and sufficient, that sith every man that hath them, either setteth by them for the world or for God: he that setteth by them for the world hath (as I have shewed you) little profit by them to the body, and great harm unto the soul; and therefore may well, if he be wise, reckon that he winneth by the loss, although he lost them but by some common chance; and much more happy then, while he loseth them by such a meritorious mean.

Note this comfort.

* Gal. vi.

† Psal. cxxxviii.

‡ Ibidem, xviii.

And on the tother side, he that keepeth them for some good purpose, intending to bestow them for the pleasure of God, the loss of them in this Turk's persecution for keeping of the faith, can be no manner grief unto him; sith that by his so parting from them, he bestoweth them in such wise unto God's pleasure, that at that time when he loseth them, by no way could he bestow them unto his high pleasure better. For though it had been peradventure better to have bestowed them well before, yet sith he kept them for some good purpose, he would not have left them unbestowed if he had forknow the chance. But being now prevented so by persecution, that he cannot bestow them in that other good way that he would, yet while he parteth from them because he will not part from the faith, though the devil's escheator violently take them from him, yet willingly he The devil's escheators. giveth them to God.

CHAPTER XIV.

Another cause, for which any man should be content to forego his goods in the Turk's said persecution.



INCENT.—I CANNOT in good faith, uncle, say nay to none of this. And indeed unto them that by the Turk's overrunning of the country were happed to be spoiled and robbed, and all their substance, moveable and unmoveable, bereft and lost already,

their persons only fled and safe: I think that these considerations (considered therewith that, as you lately said, their sorrow could not amend their chance) might unto them be good occasion of comfort, and cause them, as you said, to make a virtue of necessity. But in the case, uncle, that we now speak of, that is to wit, where they have yet their substance untouched in their own hands, and that the keeping or the losing shall hang both in their own hands by the Turk's offer upon the retaining or renouncing of the Christian faith: here, uncle, I find it, as you said, that this temptation is most sore and most perilous. For I fear me that we shall find few (of such as have much to lose) that shall find in their hearts so suddenly to forsake their goods with all those other things afore rehearsed, whereupon all their worldly wealth dependeth.

*Few such
found, the more
pitig.*

ANTONY.—That fear I much, cousin, too. But thereby shall it well, as I said, appear, that seemed they never so good and virtuous before, and flattered they themselves with never so gay a gloss of good and gracious purpose

that they kept their goods for, yet were their hearts inwardly in the deep sight of God, not sound and sure, such as they should be, and as peradventure ^{God's sight pierceth deep.} some had themselves weened they had been, but like a purse-ring of Paris, hollow, light, and counterfeit indeed. And yet they being such, this would I fain ask one of them, and I pray you, cousin, take you his person upon you, and in this case answer for him; what letteth, would I ask you (for we will take no small man for a sample in this part, nor him that had little to lose, for such one were methink so far from all fame, that would cast away God for a little, that he were ^{Yet how many such are now.} not worthy to talk with), what letteth I say therefore your lordship, that you be not gladly content, without any deliberation at all, in this kind of persecution, rather than to leave your faith, to let go all that ever you have at once?

VINCENT.—Sith you put it, uncle, unto me: to make the matter more plain, that I should play that great man's part that is so wealthy, and hath so much to lose; albeit I cannot be very sure of another man's mind, nor what another man would say, yet as far as my own mind can conjecture, I shall answer in his person what I ween would be his let. And therefore to your question I answer, that there letteth me the thing that yourself may lightly guess, the losing of the manifold commodities which I now have: riches and substance, lands and great possessions of inheritance, with great rule and authority here in my country. All which things the great Turk granteth me to keep still in peace, and have them enhanced too, so that I will forsake the faith of Christ. Yea, I may say to you, I have a motion secretly made me farther, to keep all this yet better cheap, that is to wit, ^{The right practice used also now.} not be compelled utterly to forsake Christ, nor all the whole Christian faith, but only some such parts thereof, as may not stand with Mahomet's law, and only granting Mahomet for a true prophet, and serving the Turk truly in his wars against all Christian kings, I shall not be letted to praise Christ also, and to call him a good man, and worship him and serve him too.

ANTONY.—Nay, nay, my lord, Christ hath not so great need of your lordship, as rather than to lose your service, he would fall at such covenants with you, to take your service at halves, to serve him and his enemy both. He hath given you plain warning already by St. Paul, that he will have in your service no parting fellow. *Quæ societas lucis ad tenebras? Quæ autem conventio Christi ad Belial?*—What fellowship is there between light and darkness, between Christ and Belial? * And he hath also plainly shewed you himself by his own mouth: *Nemo potest duobus dominis servire*;—No man may serve two lords at once. † He will have you believe all that he telleth you, and do all that he biddeth you, and forbear all that he forbiddeth you, without any manner exception. Break one of his commandments, and break all. Forsake one point of his faith, and forsake all, as for any thank you get for the remnant. And therefore if you devise as it were indentures between God and you, what thing you will do for him, and what thing you will not do, as though he should hold him content with such service of yours, as yourself list to appoint him: if you make, I say, such indentures, you shall seal both the parts yourself, and you get thereto none agreement of him. And this I say though the Turk would make such an appointment with you as you speak of, and would when he had made it, keep it, whereas he would not, I warrant you, leave you so, when he had brought you so far forth, but would little and little after ere he left you, make you deny Christ altogether, and take Mahomet in his stead. And so doth he in the beginning, when he will not have you believe him to be God. For surely if he were not God, he were no good man neither, while he plainly said he was God. But though he would never go so far forth with you, yet Christ will (as I said) not take your service to halves, but will that you should love him with all your whole heart. And because that while he was living here fifteen hundred year ago, he foresaw this mind of yours that you have

God's service
goeth not at
halves.

Indentures
with God.

And have they
not done so?

* 2 Cor. vi.

† Luc. vi.

now, with which you would fain serve him in some such fashion, as you might keep your worldly substance still, and rather forsake his service, than put all your substance from you: he telleth you plain fifteen hundred year ago his own mouth, that he will no such service of you, saying, *Non potestis Deo servire, et Mammonæ*,—You cannot serve both God and your riches together.*

And therefore this thing stablished for a plain conclusion, which you must needs grant, if you have faith, (and if you be gone from that ground of faith already then is all your disputation, you wot well, at an end. For whereto should you then rather lose your goods than forsake your faith, if you have lost your faith and let it go already?) this point, I say therefore, put first for a ground between us both twain agreed, that you have yet the faith still, and intend to keep it alway still in your heart, and are but in doubt, whether you will lose all your worldly substance rather than forsake your faith in your only word: now shall I reply to the point of your answer, wherein you tell me the loathness of the loss, and the comfort of the keeping letteth you to forego them, and moveth you rather to forsake your faith. I let pass all that I have spoken of the small commodity of them unto your body, and of the great harm that the having of them doth to your soul. And sith the promise of the Turk, made unto you for the keeping of them, is the thing that moveth you and maketh you thus to doubt, I ask you first, whereby you wot that when you have done all that he will have you do against Christ to the harm of your soul, whereby wot you, I say, that he will keep you his promise in these things that he promiseth you, concerning the retaining of your well-beloved worldly wealth for the pleasure of your body?

VINCENT.—What surety can a man have of such a great prince but his promise, which for his own honour it cannot become him to break?

ANTONY.—I have known him, and his father before him too, break more promises than five, as The Turk's promise. great as this is that he should here make with

* Matth. vi.

you. Who shall come and cast it in his teeth, and tell him it is a shame for him to be so fickle and so false of his promise? And then what careth he for those words, that he wotteth well he shall never hear? Not very much, although they were told him to. If you might come after and complain your grief unto his own person yourself, you should find him as shamefast as a friend of mine (a merchant) found once the Soudan of Syria, to whom (being certain years about his merchandise in that ~~More such~~ country) he gave a great sum of money for a ~~Soudans now.~~ certain office meet for him there for the while, which he scant had granted him and put in his hand, but that ere ever it were ought worth unto him the Soudan suddenly sold it to another of his own sect, and put our Hungarian out. Then came he to him, and humbly put him in remembrance of his grant passed his own mouth and signed with his own hand. Whereunto the Soudan answered him with a grim countenance: "I will thou wit it, losel, that neither my mouth nor my hand shall be master over me, to bind all my body at their pleasure, but I will so be lord and master over them both, that whatsoever the one say, or the other wit, I will be at mine own liberty to do what me list myself, and ask ~~Such lords and~~ them both no leave. And therefore go get ~~masters be~~ thee hence out of my countries, knave." Ween ~~many now.~~ you now, my lord, that Soudan and this Turk, being both of one false sect, you may not find them both like false of their promise?

VINCENT.—That must I needs jeopard, for other surety can there none be had.

ANTONY.—An unwise jeoparding, to put ~~An unwise jeoparding to trust~~ your soul in peril of damnation for the keep- ~~Turkish promises.~~ ing of your bodily pleasures, and yet without surety thereof must jeopard them too. But yet go a little farther, lo; suppose me that ye might be very sure, that the Turk would break no promise with you: are you then sure enough to retain all your substance still?

VINCENT.—Yea, then.

ANTONY.—What if a man should ask you, how long?

VINCENT.—How long? As long as I live.

ANTONY.—Well, let it be so then. But yet as far as I can see, though the great Turk favour you never so much, and let you keep your goods as long as ever you live, yet if it hap, that you be at this day fifty year old, all the favour that he can shew you cannot make you one day younger to-morrow, but every day shall you wax older than other. And then within a while must you, for all his favour, lose all.

VINCENT.—Well, a man would be glad for all that, to be sure not to lack while he liveth.

*A great reason
with most men
now.*

ANTONY.—Well then, if the great Turk give you your good, can there then in all your life no other take them from you again?

VINCENT.—Verily, I suppose, no.

ANTONY.—May he not lose this country again unto Christian men, and you with the taking of this way fall in the same peril then, that you would now eschew?

VINCENT.—Forsooth, I think, that if he get it once, he will never after lose it again in our days.

ANTONY.—Yes, by God's grace: but yet if he lose it after your days, there goeth your children's inheritance away again. But be it now that he could never lose it; could none take your substance from you then?

VINCENT.—No, in good faith, none.

ANTONY.—No? None at all? Not God?

VINCENT.—God? What, yes, pardie: who doubteth of that?

ANTONY.—Who? Marry he that doubteth whether there be any God, or no. And that there lacketh not some such the prophet testifieth, where he saith: *Dixit insipiens in corde suo, non est Deus*,—The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.* With the mouth the most foolish will forbear to say it unto other folk, but in the heart they let not to say it softly to themselves. And I fear me there be many more such fools than every man would ween there were, and would not let to say it openly too, if they forbore it not more for dread of shame of men, than for any fear of God.

*Many be such
fools.*

* Psal. xiii. et xxxii.

But now those that are so frantic foolish as to ween there were no God, and yet in their words confess him (though that as Paul saith,* in their deeds they deny him) we shall let them pass, till it please God to shew himself unto them, either inwardly betime, by his merciful grace, or else outwardly (but over late for them) by this terrible judgment. But unto you, my lord, sith you believe and confess (like as a wise man should) that though the Turk keep you promise in letting you keep your substance, because you do him pleasure in the forsaking of your faith; yet God (whose faith you forsake, and therein do him displeasure) may so take them from you, that the great Turk with all the power he hath, is not able to keep you: then why will you be so unwise, with the loss of your soul to please the great Turk for your goods, while you wot well, that God, whom you displease therewith, may take them from you too?

God sheweth
himself two
ways.

Beside this, sith you believe there is a God, you cannot but believe therewith, that the great Turk cannot take your good from you without his will or sufferance, no more than the devil could from Job. And think you then, that if he will suffer the Turk take away your good, albeit that by the keeping and confessing of his faith you please him; he will when you displease him by forsaking his faith, suffer you of those goods that you get or keep, thereby to rejoice and enjoy any benefit?

VINCENT.—God is gracious, and though that men offend him, yet he suffereth them many times to live in prosperity long after.

ANTONY.—Long after? Nay by my troth, my lord, that doth he no man. For how can that be, that he should suffer you live in prosperity long after, when your whole life is but short in all together, and either almost half thereof, or more than half (you think yourself, I dare say), spent out already before? Can you burn out half a short candle, and then have a long one left of the remnant? There cannot in this world be a worse mind, than a man to delight and take

This life is like
a short candle.

* Titum i.

comfort in any commodity that he taketh by sinful mean. For it is very straight way toward the taking of boldness and courage in sin, and finally to fall into infidelity, and think that God careth not nor regardeth not what thing men do here, nor what mind we be of. But, unto such minded folk speaketh Holy Scripture in this wise; *Noli dicere, peccavi, et nihil mihi accidit tristi: patiens enim redditor est Dominus*,—Say not, I have sinned, and yet hath happened me no harm: for God suffereth before he strike.* But, as St. Austin saith, the longer that he tarryeth ere he strike, the sorer is the stroke when he striketh. And therefore if ye will well do, reckon yourself very sure, that when you deadly displease God for the getting or the keeping of your good, God shall not suffer those goods to do you good, but either shall he take them shortly from you, or suffer you to keep them for a little while to your more harm: and after shall he, when you east look therefor, take you away from them. And then what an heap of heaviness will there enter into your heart, when you shall see that you shall so suddenly go from your goods and leave them here in the earth in one place, and that your body shall be put in the earth in another place: and (which then shall be most heaviness of all) when you shall fear (and not without great cause) that your soul shall first forthwith, and after that (at the final judgment) your body too, be driven down deep toward the centre of the earth into the fiery pit and dungeon of the devil of hell, there to tarry in torment world without end? What goods of this world can any man imagine, whereof the pleasure and commodity could be such in a thousand year, as were able to recompense that intolerable pain that there is to be suffered in one year, yea in one day or in one hour either? And then what a madness is it, for the poor pleasure of your worldly goods of so few years, to cast yourself both body and soul into the everlasting fire of hell, whereof is not minished the mountenance of a moment by the lying there the space of an hundred thousand years! And therefore our Saviour in few words concluded and confuted all

A heap of
heaviness.

* Eccles. v.

these follies of them, that for the short use of this worldly substance forsake him and his faith, and sell their souls unto the devil for ever, where he saith: *Quid prodest homini, si universum mundum lucretur, animæ vero suæ detrimentum patiatur?*—What availeth it a man, if he won all the whole world, and lost his soul? * This were, methinketh, cause and occasion enough to him that had never so much part of this world in his hand, to be content rather to lose it all, than for the retaining or increasing of his worldly goods, to lose and destroy his soul?

VINCENT.—This is, good uncle, in good faith very true, and what other thing any of them (that would not for this be content) have for to allege in reason for the defence of their folly, that can I not imagine, nor list not in this matter to play their part no longer. But I pray God give me the grace to play the contrary part indeed, and that I never for any goods or substance of this wretched world, forsake my faith toward God, neither in heart, nor tongue, as I trust in his great goodness I never shall.

* Matth. xvi., Marc. viii., Luc. ix.

CHAPTER XV.

This kind of Tribulation trieth what mind men have to their goods, which they that are wise will at the same thereof see well and wisely laid up safe before.



ANTONY.—METHINKETH, cousin, that this persecution shall not only, as I said before, try men's hearts when it cometh, and make them know their own affections, whether they have a corrupt, greedy, covetous mind, or not: but also the very fame and expectation thereof may teach them this lesson, ere ever the thing fall upon them itself, to their no little fruit, if they have the wit and the grace to take it in time while they may. For now may they find sure places to lay their treasures in, so that all the Turk's army shall never find it out.

VINCENT.—Marry, uncle, that way they will, I warrant you, not forget, as near as their wits will serve them. But yet have I known some, that have ere this thought that they had hid their money safe and sure enough, digging full deep in the ground, and have missed it yet when they came again, and have found it digged out, and carried away to their hands.

ANTONY.—Nay, from their hands, I ween you would say. And it was no marvel. For some such have I known too, but they have hid their goods foolishly, in such places as they were well warned before that they should not. And that were they warned by him, that they well knew for such one, as wist well enough what would come thereon.

VINCENT.—Then were they more than mad. But did

he tell them too, where they should have hid it to have it sure?

ANTONY.—Yea, by St. Mary, did he. For else had he told them but half a tale. But he told them a whole tale, bidding them, that they should in no wise hide their treasure in the ground. And he shewed them a good cause: for there thieves use to dig it out, and steal it away.

VINCENT.—Why, where should they hide it then, said he? For thieves may hap to find it out in any place.

ANTONY.—Forsooth he counselled them to hide their treasure in heaven, and there lay it up, for there it shall
Only true men
come to heaven. lie safe. For thither he said there can no thief come, till he have left his theft and be waxen

a true man first. And he that gave this counsel, wist what he said well enough. For it was our Saviour himself, which in the Gospel of St. Matthew saith: *Nolite thesaurare vobis thesauros in terra, ubi ærugo et tinea demolitur, et ubi fures effodiunt et furantur. Thesaurizate autem vobis thesauros in cælo, ubi neque ærugo, neque tinea demolitur, et ubi fures non effodiunt nec furantur. Ubi enim est thesaurus tuus, ibi est et cor tuum*:—Hoard not up for you treasures in earth, where the rust and the moth fret it out, and where the thieves dig it out, and steal it away. But hoard up your treasures in heaven, where neither the rust nor the moth fret them out, and where thieves dig them not out, nor steal them away. For where as is thy treasure, there is thy heart too.* If we would well consider these words of our Saviour Christ, we should, as methink, need no more counsel at all, nor no more comfort neither, concerning the loss of our temporal substance in this Turk's persecution for the faith. For here our Lord in these words teacheth us where we may lay up our substance safe, before the persecution come.

A safe and sure
place for treasure. If we put it into the poor men's bosoms, there shall it lie safe. For who would go search a beggar's bag for money? If we deliver it to the poor for Christ's sake, we deliver it unto Christ himself. And then what persecutor can there be so strong, as to take it out of his hand?

* Matth. vi.

VINCENT.—These things are, uncle, undoubtedly so true, that no man may with words wrestle therewith. But yet ever there hangeth in a man's heart a loathness to lack a living.

Lack of liking
a sore tempta-
tion.

ANTONY.—There doth indeed, in theirs, that either never or but seldom hear any good counsel there against. And when they hear it, hearken it but as they would an idle tale, rather for a pastime, or for the manner sake, than for any substantial intent or purpose to follow good advertisement, and take any fruit thereby. But verily, if we would not only lay our ear, but also our heart thereto, and consider that the saying of our Saviour Christ is not a poet's fable, nor an harper's song, but the very holy word of Almighty God himself, we would, and well we might, be full sore ashamed in ourself, and full sorry too, when we felt in our affection those words to have in our hearts no more strength and weight, but that we remain still of the same dull mind, as we did before we heard them.

The right hear-
ing of God's
word.

This manner of ours, in whose breasts the great good counsel of God no better setteth nor taketh no better root, may well declare us that the thorns, and the briers, and the brambles of our worldly substance grow so thick, and spring up so high in the ground of our hearts, that they strangle, as the Gospel saith,* the word of God that was sown therein. And therefore is God very good Lord unto us, when he causeth like a good husbandman his folk to come afield (for the persecutors be his folk to this purpose) and with their hooks and their stock-
ing-irons grub up these wicked weeds and bushes of our earthly substance, and carry them quite away from us, that the word of God sown in our hearts may have room therein, and a glade round about for the warm sun of grace to come to it and make it grow. For surely these words of our Saviour shall we find full true: *Ubi thesaurus tuus, ibi est et cor tuum*,—Where as thy treasure is, there is also thy heart.† If we lay up our treasure in earth, in earth shall be our hearts. If we send our treasure into heaven, in heaven shall we

Now is God's
weeding and
grubbing time.

* Matth. xiii.

† Ibidem vi.

Greatest comfort. have our hearts. And surely the greatest comfort that any may have in this tribulation, is to have his heart in heaven. If thy heart were indeed out of this world and in heaven, all the kinds of torment that all this world could devise, could put thee to no pain here. Let us then send our hearts hence thither, in such manner as we may (by sending thither our worldly substance) please God. And let us never doubt it but we shall (that once done) find our hearts so conversant in heaven, with the glad consideration of our following the gracious counsel of Christ, that the comfort of his Holy Spirit (inspired us therefor) shall mitigate, minish, assuage, and in a manner quench the great furious fervour of the pain that we shall hap to have by his loving sufferance for our farther merit in our tribulation.

A good similitude, and true both ways.

And therefore, like as if we saw that we should be within a while driven out of this land, and fain to flee into another, we would ween that man were mad, which would not be content to forbear his goods here for the while, and send them into that land before him, where he should live all the remnant of his life: so may we verily think yet ourself much more mad (seeing that we be sure it cannot be long ere we shall be sent spite of our teeth out of this world) if the fear of a little lack, or the love to see our goods here about us, and the loathness to part from them for this little while which we may keep them here, shall be able to let us from that sure sending them before us into the tother world, in which we may be sure to live wealthily with them, if we send them thither, or else shortly leave them here behind us, and then stand in great jeopardy, there to live wretches for ever.

VINCENT.—In good faith, uncle, methink that concerning the loss of these outward things, these considerations are so sufficient comforts, that for mine own part, save only grace well to remember them, I would methink desire no more.

CHAPTER XVI.

Another Comfort and Courage against the loss of worldly Substance.



ANTONY.—MUCH less than this may serve, cousin, with calling and trusting upon God's help, without which, much more than this cannot serve. But the fervour of the Christian faith so sore fainteth nowadays, and decayeth, coming from hot unto lukewarm, and from lukewarm almost to key-cold, that men must now be fain as at a fire that is almost out, to lay many dry sticks thereto, and use much blowing thereat. But else would I ween by my troth, that unto a warm faithful man one thing alone, whereof we spake yet not a word, were comfort enough in this kind of persecution against the loss of all his goods.

VINCENT.—What thing may that be, uncle?

ANTONY.—In good faith, cousin, even the bare remembrance of the poverty that our Saviour willingly suffered for us. For I verily suppose, that if there were a great king that had so tender love to a servant of his, that he had (to help him out of danger) forsaken and left of all his worldly wealth and royalty, and become poor and needy for his sake: the servant could scant be found that were of such an unkind villain courage, that if himself came after to some substance, would not with better will lose it all again, than shamefully to forsake such a master. And therefore, as I say, I do surely suppose,

Faith sore decayed.

Christ's wilful poverty.

Such vile villain servants be many now.

that if we would well remember and inwardly consider the great goodness of our Saviour Christ toward us, not yet being his poor sinful servants, but rather his adversaries and his enemies, and what wealth of this world that he willingly forsook for our sake, being indeed universal king thereof, and so having the power in his own hand to have used it, if he had would, instead whereof (to make us rich in heaven) he lived here in neediness and poverty all his life, and neither would have authority, nor keep neither lands nor goods: the deep consideration and earnest advisement of this one point alone, were able to make any kind Christian man or woman well content rather for his sake again to give up all that ever God hath lent them (and lent them hath he all that ever they have) than unkindly and unfaithfully to forsake him. And him they forsake, if that for fear they forsake the confession of his Christian faith.

All is but lent
to us.

Forsaking of
Christ.

And therefore to finish this piece withal, concerning the dread of losing our outward worldly goods, let us consider the slender commodity that they bring, with what labour they be bought, how little they abide with whomsoever they be longest, what pain their pleasure is mingled withal, what harm the love of them doth unto the soul, what loss is in the keeping (Christ's faith refused for them), what winning in the loss, if we lose them for God's sake, how much more profitable they be well given than evil kept, and finally, what unkindness it were, if we would not rather forsake them for Christ's sake, than unfaithfully forsake Christ for them, which, while he lived, for our sake forsook all the world, beside the suffering of shameful and painful death, whereof we shall speak after: if we these things, I say, will consider well, and will pray God with his holy hand to print them in our hearts, and will abide and dwell still in the hope of his help: his truth shall (as the prophet saith) so compass us about with a pavice, that we shall not need to be afraid *ab incursu et dæmonio meridiano*,—of this incursion of the mid-day devil, this open plain persecution of the Turk, for any loss that we can take by the bereaving from

us of our worldly goods, for whose short and small pleasure in this life forborne, we shall be with heavenly substance everlastingly recompensed of God in joyful bliss and glory.

CHAPTER XVII.

Of bodily Pain, and that a man hath no cause to take discomfort in persecution, though he feel himself in an horror at the thinking upon the bodily pain.



INCENT.—FORSOOTH, uncle, as for these outward goods, you have so farforth said, that no man can be sure what strength he shall have, or how faint and how feeble he may hap to find himself when he shall hap to come to the point, and therefore I can make no warrantise of myself, seeing that St. Peter so suddenly fainted at a woman's word and so cowardly forsook his master, for whom he had so boldly fought within so few hours afore, and by that fall in forsaking well perceived that he had been rash in his promise, and was well worthy to take a fall for putting so full trust in himself: yet in good faith methinketh now (and God shall I trust help me to keep this thought still), that if the Turk should take all that I have unto my very shirt (except I would forsake my faith) and offer it me all again with five times as much thereto to fall into his sect, I would not once stick thereat, rather to forsake it every whit than of Christ's holy faith to forsake any one point. But surely, good uncle, when I bethink me farther on the

grief and the pain that may turn unto my flesh, here find I the fear that forceth my heart to tremble.

ANTONY.—Neither have I cause to marvel thereof, nor you, cousin, cause to be dismayed therefor. The great horror and fear that our Saviour had in his own flesh against his painful passion, maketh me little to marvel, and may well make you take that comfort too, that for no such manner of grudging felt in your sensual parts, the flesh shrinking at the meditation of pain and death, your reason shall give over, but resist it and manly master it. And though you would fain flee from the painful death, and be loth to come thereto; yet may the meditation of his great grievous agony move you, and himself shall, if you so desire him, not fail to work with you therein, and get and give you the grace, that you shall submit and conform your will therein unto his, as he did unto his Father, and shall thereupon be so comforted with the secret inward inspiration of his Holy Spirit, as he was with the personal presence of the angel that after his agony came and comforted him,* that you shall as his true disciple follow him, and with good will without grudge do as he did, and take your cross of pain and passion on your back, and die for the truth with him, and thereby reign with him crowned in eternal glory. And this, I say, to give you warning of the thing that is truth, to the intent when a man feels such an horror of death in his heart, he should not thereby stand in outrageous fear that he were falling. For many a such man standeth for all that fear full fast, and finally better abideth the brunt, when God is so good unto him as to bring him thereto, and encourage him therein, than doth some other that in the beginning feeleth no fear at all. And yet may it be, and most often so it is, that God having many mansions, and all wonderful wealthful in his Father's house,† exalteth not every good man up to the glory of a martyr, but foreseeing their infirmity, that though they be of good will before, and peradventure of right good courage too, would yet play St. Peter, if they were brought

Every man not
meet to be a
martyr.

* Luc. xxii.

† Johan. xiv.

to the point, and thereby bring their souls into the peril of eternal damnation: he provideth otherwise for them, before they come thereat, and either findeth a way that men shall not have the mind to lay any hands upon them, as he found for his disciples,* when himself was willingly taken, or that if they set hand on them, they shall have no power to hold them, as he found for St. John the Evangelist,† which let his sheet fall from him, whereupon they caught hold, and fled himself naked away, and scaped from them; or, though they hold him and bring him to prison too, yet God sometime delivereth them thence, as he did St. Peter,‡ and sometime he taketh them to him, out of prison into heaven, and suffereth them not to come to their torment at all, as he hath done by many a good holy man. And some he suffereth to be brought into the torments, and yet he suffereth them not to die therein, but live many years after, and die their natural death, as he did by St. John the Evangelist and by many another more, as we may well see both in sundry stories,§ and in the epistles of St. Cyprian also.||

And therefore which way God will take with us, we cannot tell: but surely if we be true Christian men, this can we well tell, that without any bold warrantise of ourself, or foolish trust in our strength, we be bound upon pain of damnation, that we be not of the contrary mind, but that we will with his help (how loth soever we feel our flesh thereto) rather yet than forsake him or his faith afore the world (which if we do, he hath promised to forsake us before his Father,¶ and all the holy company of heaven), rather, I say, than we would so do, we would with his help endure and sustain for his sake all the tormentry that the devil with all his faithless tormentors in this world could devise. And then when we be of this mind, and submit our will unto his, and call and pray for his grace, we can tell well enough that he will never suffer

* Matth. xxvi.

† Marc. xiv.

‡ Actor. xii.

§ Theodor. Hist. lib. iii. c. 16; Euseb. Hist. lib. iii. c. 25; De Blandina et aliis, Hist. Eccl. lib. v. cap. 2.

|| Lib. ii. epist. 6, et lib. iv. epist. 5.

¶ Luc. xii.

them to put more upon us than his grace will make us able to bear, but will also with their temptation provide for us a sure way. A sure way.

For *Fidelis Deus* (saith St. Paul) *qui non patitur vos tentari, supra id quod potestis, sed dat etiam cum tentatione proventum*,—God is, saith the apostle, faithful, which suffereth you not to be tempted above that you may bear, but giveth also with the temptation a way out.* For either, as I said, he will keep us out of their hands (though he before suffer us to be feared with them to prove our faith withal, that we may have by the examination of our own mind, some comfort in hope of his grace, and some fear of our own frailty to drive us to call for grace), or else if we fall in their hands, so that we fall not from him, nor cease to call for his help, his truth shall, as the prophet saith, so compass us about with a pavice, that we shall need not to fear this incursion of this midday devil. For either shall these Turk's tormentors that shall enter into this land and persecute us, either they shall, I say, not have the power to touch our bodies at all, or else the short pain that they shall put into our bodies, shall turn us to eternal profit both in our souls and in our bodies too.

And therefore, cousin, to begin with, let us be of good comfort. For sith we be by our faith very sure that Holy Scripture is the very word of God, and that the word of God cannot be but very true, and that we see that both by the mouth of his holy prophet, and by the mouth of his blessed apostle also, God hath made us so faithful promise, both that he will not suffer us to be tempted above our power, but will both provide a way out for us, and that he will also round about so compass us with his pavice, and defend us, that we shall have no cause to fear this midday devil with all his persecution: we cannot now but be very sure (except we be very shamefully cowardous of heart, and toward God in faith out of measure faint, and in love less than lukewarm, or waxen even key-cold), we may be very sure, I say, that either God shall not suffer the Turks to invade this land,

* 1 Cor. x.

or, if they do, God shall provide such resistance that they shall not prevail: or, if they do prevail, yet if we take the way that I have told you, we shall by their persecution take little harm or rather no harm at all, but that that shall seem harm, shall indeed be to us no harm at all, but good. For if God make us and keep us good men (as he hath promised to do, if we pray therefor) then saith Holy Scripture: *Bonis omnia cooperantur in bonum*,—Unto good folk all things turn them to good.*

And therefore, cousin, sith that God knoweth what shall hap, and not we, let us in the meanwhile with a good hope in the help of God's grace, have a good purpose with us of sure standing by his holy faith against all persecutions. From which if we should (which our Lord forbid) hereafter either for fear of pain, or for lack of grace (lost in our own default) mishap to decline: yet had we both won the well-spent time in this good purpose before, to the minishment of our pain, and were also much the more likely, that God should lift us up after our fall, and give us his grace again. Howbeit, if this persecution come, we be by this meditation and well-continued intent and purpose before, the better strengthened and confirmed, and much the more likely for to stand indeed. And if it so fortune (as with God's grace at men's good prayers and amendment of our evil lives, it may fortune full well) that the Turk shall either be well withstanden and vanquished, or peradventure not invade us at all: then shall we, pardie, by this good purpose get ourself of God a very good cheap thank. And on the other side, while we now think thereon (as not to think thereon, in so great likelihood thereof, I ween no wise man can) if we should for the fear of worldly loss, or bodily pain, framed in our own minds, think that we would give over, and to save our goods and our lives, forsake our Saviour by denial of his faith, then whether the Turk come, or come not, we be gone from God the while. And then if they come not indeed, or come and be driven to flight, what a shame should this

The way to
withstand
Turks and
heretics.

* Rom. viii.

be to us before the face of God, in so shameful cowardous
How many such wise to forsake him for fear of that pain that
cowards be we never felt, nor never was falling towards
there! us?

VINCENT.—By my troth, uncle, I thank you. Methink, that though you never said more in the matter, yet have you even with this that you have (of the fear of bodily pain in this persecution) spoken here already, marvelously comforted my heart.

ANTONY.—I am glad, cousin, if your heart have taken comfort thereby. But and if you so have, give God the thank, and not me, for that work is his, and not mine. For neither am I able any good thing to say, but by him, nor all the good words in this world, no not the holy words of God himself, and spoken also with his own holy mouth, can be able to profit the man with the sound entering at his ear, but if the spirit of God therewith inwardly work in his soul; but that is his goodness ever ready to do, except the let be through the untowardness of our own froward will.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Of Comfort against bodily Pain, and first against Captivity.



ND therefore now being somewhat in comfort and courage before, whereby we may the more quietly consider every thing, which is somewhat more hard and difficile to do, when the heart is before taken up and oppressed with the troublous affection of heavy sorrowful fear: let us examine the weight and substance of these bodily pains, as the sorest part of this persecution which you rehearsed before, which were (if I remember you right) thralldom, imprisonment, painful and shameful death. And first let us, as reason is, begin with the thralldom, for that was, I remember, the first.

VINCENT.—I pray you, good uncle, say then somewhat thereof. For methinketh, uncle, that captivity is a marvellous heavy thing, namely when they Captivity. shall, as they most commonly do, carry us far from home, into a strange uncouth land.

ANTONY.—I cannot say nay, but that some grief it is, cousin, indeed. But yet as unto me not half so much as it would be, if they could carry me out into any such unknown country, that God could not wit where, nor find the mean how to come at me. But in good faith, cousin, now, if my transmigration into a strange country should be any great grief unto me, the fault should be much in myself. For sith I am very sure that whithersoever men convey me, God is no more verily here, than he shall be there: if I get (as I may, if I will) the grace to set my whole heart on him, and long for nothing but him, it can

then make no great matter to my mind, whether they carry me hence or leave me here. And then if I find my mind much offended therewith, that I am not still here in mine own country, I must consider that the cause of my grief is my own wrong imagination, whereby I beguile myself with an untrue persuasion, weening that this were mine own country, whereas of truth it is not so. For as St. Paul saith, *Non habemus hic civitatem manentem, sed futuram inquirimus*,—We have here no city nor dwelling country at all, but we look for one that we shall come to.* And in what country soever we walk in this world,

~~We be all pil-~~
~~grims.~~

we be but as pilgrims and wayfaring men. And if I should take any country for my own, it must be that country to which I come, and not the country from which I came. That country that shall be

~~Which is our~~
~~own country.~~

to me then for a while so strange, shall yet, pardie, be no more strange to me, nor longer strange to me neither, than was mine own native country when I came first into it. And therefore if that point of my being far from hence be very grievous to me, and that I find it a great pain, that I am not where I would be : that grief shall great part grow for lack of sure setting and settling my mind in God, where it should be ; which fault of mine when I mend, I shall soon ease my grief. Now as for all the other griefs and pains that are in captivity, thralldom, and bondage ; I cannot deny but many there are and great. Howbeit they seem yet somewhat (what say I somewhat, I may say a great deal) the more, because we took our former liberty for more or a great deal, than indeed it was. Let us therefore consider the matter thus.

~~What is cap-~~
~~tivity.~~

Captivity, bondage, or thralldom, what is it but the violent restraint of a man, being so subdued under the dominion, rule, and power of another, that he must do what the other list to command him, and may not at his liberty do such things as he list himself. Now when we shall be carried away with a Turk, and be fain to be occupied about such things as he list to set us ; here shall we lament the loss of our liberty, and

think we bear an heavy burden of our servile condition And so to do (I grant well) we shall have many times great occasion. But yet should we, I suppose, set thereby somewhat the less, if we would remember well, what liberty that was that we lost, and take it for no larger than it was indeed. For we reckon, as though we might before do what we would: but therein deceive we ourself.

*Worldly
liberty.*

For what free man is there so free, that can be suffered to do what him list? In many things God hath restrained us by his high commandment, and so many that of those things which else we would do, I ween it be more than the half. Howbeit, because (God forgive us!) we let so little therefor, but do what we list, as though we heard him not, we reckon our liberty never the less for that. But then is our liberty much restrained by the laws made by men, for the quiet and politic governance of the people. And these would, I ween, let our liberty but a little neither, were it not for fear of the pains that fall thereupon. Look then whether other men, that have authority over us, command us never no business which we dare not but do, and therefore do it full oft full sore against our wills. Of which things some service is sometime so painful and so perilous too, that no lord can lightly command his bondman worse, nor seldom doth command him half so sore. Let every free man that reckoneth his liberty to stand in doing what he list, consider well these points, and I ween he shall then find his liberty much less, than he took it for before.

*God's restraint
letteth little
now.*

*Of the slavery of
the world!*

And yet have I left untouched the bondage, that almost every man is in that boasteth himself for free; the bondage of the bondage, I mean, of sin. Which to be a very bondage, I shall have our Saviour himself to bear me good record. For he saith: *Omnis qui facit peccatum, servus est peccati*, — Every man that committeth sin, is the thrall, or the bondsman of sin.* And then, if this be thus (as it must needs so be, sith God saith it is so), who is there then that may make so much boast of his

*The bondage of
sin.*

* Johan. viii.

liberty, that he should take it for so sore a thing and so strange, to become through chance of war bond unto a man, while he is already through sin become willingly thrall and bond unto the devil? Let us look well, how many things and of what vile wretched sort the devil driveth us to do daily through the rash braids of our blind affections, which we be for our faultful lack of grace fain to follow, and are too feeble to refrain, and then shall we find in our natural freedom our bond service such, that

~~That bond~~
service is in
natural free-
dom.

never was there any man lord of any so vile a villain, that ever would for very shame command him so shameful service. And let us in the doing of our service to the man that we be slave unto, remember what we were wont to do about the same time of the day, while we were at our free liberty before, and were well likely, if we were at liberty to do the like again : and we shall peradventure perceive, that it were better for us to do this business than that.

Now shall we have great occasion of comfort, if we consider, that our servitude (though in the count of the world it seem to come by chance of war) cometh yet in very deed unto us, by the provident hand of God, and that for our great good, if we will take it well, both in remission of sins, and also matter of our merit. The greatest grief that is in bondage or captivity is this, as I trow, that we be forced to do such labour as with our good will we would not. But then against that grief Seneca teacheth us a good remedy : *Semper da operam, ne quid invitus facias*,— Endeavour thyself evermore, that thou do nothing against thy will : but the thing that we see we shall needs do, let us use alway to put our good will thereto.

VINCENT.—That is, uncle, soon said : but it is hard to do.

Folk are frow-
ard unto all
goodness.

ANTONY.—Our froward mind maketh every good thing hard, and that unto our own more hurt and harm. But in this case, if we will be good Christian men, we shall have great cause gladly to be content for the great comfort that we may take thereby, while we remember that in the patient and glad doing of our service unto the man for God's sake, according to his high

commandment by the mouth of St. Paul,—*Servi, obedite dominis carnalibus*,*—we shall have our thank and our whole reward of God. Finally, if we remember the great humble meekness of our Saviour Christ himself, that he being very Almighty God, *Humiliavit semetipsum, formam servi accipiens*,—Humbled himself, and took the form of a bondman or a slave,† rather than his father should forsake us: we may think ourself very unkind caitives, and very frantic fools too, if rather than to endure this worldly bondage for a while, we would forsake him that hath by his own death delivered us out of everlasting bondage of the devil, and will for our short bondage give us everlasting liberty.

VINCENT.—Well fare you, good uncle, this is very well said. Albeit that bondage is a condition that every man of any courage would be glad to eschew, and very loth to fall in, yet have you well made it open that it is a thing neither so strange, nor so sore, as it before seemed unto me, and specially far from such, as any man that any wit hath, should for fear thereof shrink from the confession of his faith. And now, I pray you, somewhat speak of imprisonment.

* Ephes. vi.

† Philip. ii.

CHAPTER XIX.

Of Imprisonment, and Comfort there against.



ANTONY.—THAT shall I, cousin, with good will. And first, if we would consider, what thing imprisonment is of his own nature, we should not, methink, have so great horror thereof. For of itself it is, pardie, but a restraint of liberty, which letteth a man from going whither he would.

VINCENT.—Yes, by St. Mary, uncle, me-
Imprisonment. thinketh it is much more sorrow than so. For beside the let and restraint of liberty, it hath many more displeasures and very sore griefs knit and adjoined thereunto.

ANTONY.—That is, cousin, very true indeed. And those pains, among many sorer than those, thought I not after to forget. Howbeit, I purposed now, to consider first imprisonment but as imprisonment only, without any other incommodity beside. For a man may be, pardie, imprisoned, and yet not set in the stocks, nor collared fast by the neck, and a man may be let walk at large where he will, and yet a pair of fetters fast riveted on his legs. For in this country, ye wot well, and in Seville and Portingale too, so go there all the slaves. Howbeit, because that for such things men's hearts have such horror thereof, albeit I am not so mad as to go about to prove that bodily pain were no pain; yet sith that because of these manner of pains, we so specially abhor the state and condition of prisoners, we should, methink, well perceive

that a great part of our horror groweth of our own phantasy, if we would call to mind and consider the state and condition of many other folk, in whose state and condition we would wish ourself to stand, taking them for no prisoners at all, that stand yet for all that in much part of the selfsame points that we abhor imprisonment for. Let us therefore consider these things in order.

And first, as I thought to begin, because those other kinds of griefs that come with imprisonment, are but accidents thereunto, and yet neither such kinds of accidents as be either proper thereunto, but that they may (almost all) fall unto a man without it, nor are not such accidents thereunto, as are inseparable therefrom, but that imprisonment may fall to a man, and none of all them therewith : we will, I say, therefore begin with the considering what manner pain or commodity we should reckon imprisonment to be of itself, and of his own nature alone. And then in the course of our communication, you shall, as you list, increase and aggrieve the cause of your horror with the terror of those painful accidents.

VINCENT.—I am sorry that I did interrupt your tale. For you were about, I see well, to take an orderly way therein. And as yourself have devised, so I beseech you proceed. For though I reckon imprisonment much the sorer thing by sore and hard handling therein, yet reckon I not the imprisonment of itself any less than a thing very tedious, all were it used in the most favourable manner that it possibly might. For, uncle, if it were a great prince that were taken prisoner upon the field, and in the hand of a Christian king, which use in such case (for the consideration of their former state, and the mutable chance of the war) to shew much humanity to a prince's imprisonment. them, and in very favourable wise entreat them (for these infidel emperors handle oftentimes the princes that they take more villanously than they do the poorest men, as the great Tamberlane* kept the great Turk when he had taken him, to tread on his back alway while he leapt on horseback); but, as I began to say by the sample of a prince taken prisoner, were the imprisonment never so

* Sabellic. *Ænead* ix. lib. ix.

favourable, yet were it in my mind no little grief in itself for a man to be pinned up, though not in a narrow chamber, but although his walk were right large, and right fair gardens too therein, it could not but grieve his heart to be restrained by another man within certain limits and bounds, and lose the liberty to be where him list.

ANTONY.—This is, cousin, well considered of you. For in this you perceive well, that imprisonment is of itself, and his own very nature alone, nothing else but the retaining of a man's person within the circuit of a certain space, narrower or larger, as shall be limited to him, restraining his liberty from the further going into any other place.

VINCENT.—Very well said, as methinketh.

ANTONY.—Yet forgot I, cousin, to ask you one question.

VINCENT.—What is that, uncle?

ANTONY.—This, lo: if there be two men kept in two several chambers of one great castle, of which two chambers the one is much more large than the other: whether be they prisoners both, or but the one that hath the less room to walk in?

VINCENT.—What question is it, uncle, but that they be prisoners both, as I said myself before, although the one lay fast locked in stocks, and the other had all the whole castle to walk in?

ANTONY.—Methinketh verily, cousin, that you say the truth. And then if imprisonment be such a thing as yourself here agree it is, that is to wit, but a lack of liberty to go whither we list: now would I fain wit of you, what any one man you know, that is at this day out of prison?

VINCENT.—What one man, uncle? Marry I know almost none other. For surely prisoner am I none acquainted with, that I remember.

ANTONY.—Then I see well, you visit poor prisoners seld.

VINCENT.—No by my troth, uncle, I cry God mercy. I send them sometime my alms, but, by my troth, I love not to come myself where I should see such misery.

ANTONY.—In good faith, cousin Vincent, though I say it before you, you have many good conditions: but surely though I say it before you too, that condition is none of them. Which condition if you would amend, then should you have yet the more good conditions by one. And, peradventure, by more than three or four. For I assure you, it is hard to tell how much good to a man's soul the personal visiting of poor prisoners doth. But now sith you can name me none of them that are in prison, I pray you name some one of all them, that you be (as you say) better acquainted with, men, I mean, that are out of prison. For I know, methink, as few of them, as you know of the other.

*Much good in
visiting pri-
soners.*

VINCENT.—That were, uncle, a strange case. For every man is, uncle, out of prison, that may go where he will, though he be the poorest beggar in the town. And in good faith, uncle (because you reckon imprisonment so small a matter of itself), the poor beggar that is at his liberty, and may walk where he will, is as me seemeth in better case, than is a king kept in prison, that cannot go but where men give him leave.

ANTONY.—Well, cousin, whether every way-walking beggar be by this reason out of prison or no, we shall consider farther when you will. But in the meanwhile, I can by this reason see no prince that seemeth to be out of prison. For if the lack of liberty to go where a man will, be imprisonment, as yourself say it is, then is the great Turk, by whom we so fear to be put in prison, in prison already himself. For he may not go where he will: for an he might, he would into Portingale, Italy, Spain, France, Almaine, and England, and as far on another quarter too, both Prester John's land and the great Cham's too. Now the beggar that you speak of, if he be, as you say he is by reason of his liberty to go where he will, in much better case than a king kept in prison, because he cannot go but where men give him leave: then is that beggar in better case, not only than a prince in prison, but also than many a prince out of a prison too. For I am sure there is

*There not the
great Turk in
prison, he
would overrun
all.*

many a beggar that may without let, walk farther upon other men's ground, than many a prince at his best liberty may walk upon his own. And as for walking out abroad upon other men's, that prince might hap to be said nay, and holden fast, where that beggar with his bag and his staff would be suffered to go forth and hold on his way. But forasmuch, cousin, as neither the beggar nor the prince is at free liberty to walk where they will, but that if they would walk in some place, neither of them both should be suffered, but men would withstand them and say them nay: therefore if prisonment be (as you grant it is) a lack of liberty to go where we list, I cannot see, but, as I say, the beggar and the prince, whom you reckon both at liberty, be by your own reason restrained in prison both.

VINCENT.—Yea but, uncle, the one and the other have way enough to walk: the one in his own ground, the other in other men's, or in the common highway, where they may walk till they be both weary of walking ere any man say them nay.

ANTONY.—So may, cousin, that king that had, as yourself put the case, all the whole castle to walk in; and yet you say not nay, but that he is a prisoner for all that, though not so straitly kept, yet as verily prisoner, as he that lieth in the stocks.

VINCENT.—But they may go at the leastwise to every place that they need, or that is commodious for them, and therefore they do not will to go but where they may go, and therefore be they at liberty to go where they will.

ANTONY.—Me needeth not, cousin, to spend the time about the impugning every part of this answer. For letting pass by, that though a prisoner were with his keeper brought into every place where need required: yet sith he might not when he would, go where he would for his only pleasure, he were, you wot well, a prisoner still; and letting pass over also this, that it were to this beggar need, and to this king commodious, to go into divers places, where neither of them both may come: and letting pass also, that neither of them both is lightly so temperately

determined, but that they both fain so would do indeed, if this reason of yours put them out of prison, and set them at liberty, and make them free (as I will well grant it doth, if they so do) indeed; that it is to wit, if they no will to go, but where they may go indeed: then let us look on our other prisoners, inclosed within a castle, and we shall find that the straitest kept of them both, if he get the wisdom and the grace to quiet his own mind, and hold himself content with that place, and long not (like a woman with child for her lusts) to be gad-
Wisdom and grace make men free and out of prison.

ding out anywhere else, is by the same reason of yours, while his will is not longing to be anywhere else, he is, I say, at his free liberty, to be where he will, and so is out of prison too.

And on the other side, if though his will be not longing to be anywhere else, yet because that if his will so were, he should not so be suffered, he is therefore not at his free liberty, but a prisoner still: so sith your free beggar that you speak of, and the prince that you call out of prison too, though they be (which I ween very few be) by some special wisdom, so temperately disposed, that they have not the will to be, but where
Intemperate will maketh men bond and in prison.

they see they may be suffered to be, yet sith that if they would have that will, they could not then be where they would, they lack the effect of free liberty, and be both twain in prison too.

VINCENT.—Well, uncle, if every man universally be by this reason in prison already after the very property of imprisonment, yet to be imprisoned in this special manner, which manner is only commonly called imprisonment, is a thing of great horror and fear, both for the straitness of the keeping and the hard handling that many men have therein, of all which griefs, and pains, and displeasures, in this other general imprisonment that you speak of, we feel nothing at all. And therefore every man abhorreth the one, and would be loth to come into it: and no man abhorreth the other, for they feel no harm, nor find no fault therein. Wherefore, uncle, in faith though I cannot find answers convenient, wherewith to avoid your arguments, yet to be plain with you, and tell you the very

truth, my mind findeth not itself satisfied in this point : but ever methinketh, that these things, wherewith you rather convince and conclude me, than induce a credence and persuade me, that every man is prison already, be but sophistical phantasies: and that (except those that are commonly prisoners) other men are not in prison at all.

ANTONY.—Well fare thy heart, good cousin Vincent. There was in good faith no word that you spake since we talked of those matters, that half so well liked me, as these that you speak now. For if you had assented in words, and in your mind departed unpersuaded, then if the thing be true that I say, yet had you lost the fruit. And if it be peradventure false, and myself deceived therein, then while I should ween that it liked you too, you should have confirmed me in my folly. For in good faith, cousin, such an old fool am I, that this thing, in the persuading whereof unto you, I had weened I had quit me well, and when I have all done, appeareth to your mind but a trifle and a sophistical phantasy, myself have so many years taken for so very substantial truth, that as yet my mind cannot give me to think it any other. Wherefore lest I play as the French priest played, that had so long used to say *Dominus* with the second syllable long, that at the last he thought it must needs be so, and was ashamed to say it short, to the intent that you may the better perceive me, or I the better myself, we shall here between us a little more consider the thing, and hardily spit well on your hands, and take good hold, and give it not over against your own mind. For then were we never the nearer.

VINCENT.—Nay, by my troth, uncle, that intend I not, nor nothing did yet since we began. And that may you well perceive by some things, which without any great cause, save for the satisfaction of mine own mind, I repeated and debated again.

ANTONY.—That guise, cousin, hold on hardily still. For in this matter I purpose to give over my part, except I make yourself perceive, both that every man universally is a very prisoner in very prison, plainly without any sophistication at all; and that there is also no prince

living upon earth, but he is in worse case prisoner by this general imprisonment that I speak of, than is many a lewd simple wretch, by the special imprisonment that you speak of. And over this, that in this general imprisonment that I speak of, men are for the time that they be therein so sore handled and so hardly, and in such painful wise, that men's hearts have with reason great cause as sore to abhor this hard handling that is in this imprisonment, as the other that is in that.

VINCENT.—By my troth, uncle, these things would I fain see well proved.

ANTONY.—Tell me then, cousin, by your troth, if there were a man first attainted of treason or of felony, and after judgment given of his death, and that it were determined that he should die, only the time of his execution delayed till the king's farther pleasure known, and he thereupon delivered to certain keepers, and put up in a sure place, out of which he could not scape, were this man a prisoner or no? A very prisoner.

VINCENT.—This man, quod he? Yea marry that he were in very deed, if ever any man were.

ANTONY.—But now, what if for the time that were mean between his attainder and his execution, he were so favourably handled that he were suffered to do what he would, as he was while he was abroad, and to have the use of his lands and his goods, and his wife and his children license to be with him, and his friends leave at liberty to resort unto him, and his servants not forbidden to abide about him; and add yet thereunto, that the place were a great castle royal, with parks and other pleasures therein a very great circuit about; yea add yet an ye will, that he were suffered to go and ride also, both when he would, and whither he would, only this one point alway provided and foreseen, that he should ever be sorely seen to and safely kept from scaping, so that took he never so much of his own mind in the meanwhile all other ways, save scaping, yet he well knew that scape he could not, and that when he were called for, to execution and to death he should; now, cousin Vincent, what would you call this man? A prisoner, because he is

kept for execution? Or no prisoner, because he is in the meanwhile so favourably handled, and suffered to do all that he would, save scape? And I bid you not here be hasty in your answer, but advise it well, that you grant no such thing in haste, as you would after mislike by leisure, and think yourself deceived.

VINCENT.—Nay by my troth, uncle, this thing needeth no study at all in my mind, but that for all this favour shewed him, and all his liberty lent him, yet being condemned to death, and being therefor kept, and kept with such sure watch laid upon him, that he cannot scape: he is all that while a very plain prisoner still.

ANTONY.—In good faith, cousin, methinketh you say very true. But then one thing must I yet desire you, cousin, to tell me a little farther. If there were another laid in prison for a fray, and through the jailer's displeasure were bolted and fettered, and laid in a low dungeon in the stocks, where he might hap to lie peradventure for a while, and abide in the mean season some pain, but no danger of death at all, but that out again he should come well enough: whether of these two prisoners stood in worse case, he that hath all this favour, or he that is thus hardly handled?

VINCENT.—By our Lady! uncle, I ween the most part of men, if they should needs choose, had lever be such prisoners in every point, as he that so sorely lieth in the stocks, than in every point such, as he that at such liberty walketh about the park.

ANTONY.—Consider then, cousin, whether this thing seem any sophistry to you, that I shall shew you now. For it shall be such as seemeth in good faith substantially true to me. And if it so hap that you think otherwise, I will be very glad to perceive which of us both is beguiled. For it seemeth to me, cousin, first, that every man coming into this world here upon earth, as he is created by God, so cometh he hither by the providence of God. Is this any sophistry first, or not?

VINCENT.—Nay verily, this is very substantial truth.

ANTONY.—Now take I this also for very truth in my mind, that there cometh no man nor woman hither into

the earth, but that ere ever they come quick into the world out of the mother's womb, God condemneth them unto death by his own sentence and judgment for the original sin that they bring with them contracted in the corrupted stock of our forefather Adam. Is this, think you, cousin, verily thus, or not?

*All must die
once.*

VINCENT.—This is, uncle, very true indeed.

ANTONY.—Then seemeth this true farther unto me, that God hath put every man here upon the earth, under so sure and under so safe keeping, that of all the whole people living in this wide world, there is neither man, woman, nor child, would they never so far wander about and seek it, whereby they may scape from death. Is this, cousin, a fond imagined fancy, or is it very truth indeed?

*The whole
earth is God's
prison.*

VINCENT.—Nay, this is no imagination, uncle, but a thing so clearly proved true, that no man is so mad to say nay.

ANTONY.—Then need I no more, cousin. For then is all the matter plain and open evident truth, which I said I took for truth. Which is yet more a little now, than I told you before, when you took my proof yet but for a sophistical phantasy, and said, that for all my reasoning, that every man is a prisoner, yet you thought, that except those whom the common people call prisoners, there is no man a very prisoner indeed. And now you grant yourself again for very substantial truth, that every man is here (though he be the greatest king upon earth) set here by the ordinance of God in a place, be it never so large, a place, I say, yet (and you say the same) out of which no man can scape, but that therein is every man put under sure and safe keeping, to be readily set forth, when God calleth for him, and that then he shall surely die. And is not then, cousin, by your own granting before, every man a very prisoner, when he is put in a place to be kept, to be brought forth when he would not, and himself wot not whither?

*We be all
God's very pri-
soners.*

VINCENT.—Yes, in good faith, uncle, I cannot but well perceive this to be so.

ANTONY.—This were, you wot well, true, although a

man should be but taken by the arm, and in fair manner led out of this world unto his judgment. But now, while we well know that there is no king so great, but that all the while he walketh here, walk he never so loose, ride he with never so strong an army for his defence, yet himself is very sure (though he seek in the mean season

Pastime cannot put it out still.

some other pastime to put it out of his mind) —yet is he very sure, I say, that scape can he not; and very well he knoweth, that he hath

already sentence given upon him to die, and that verily die he shall, and that himself (though he hope upon long respite of his execution), yet can he not tell how

Fools indeed, that fear not this!

soon. And therefore, but if he be a fool, he can never be without fear, that either on the

morrow, or on the selfsame day, that grisly, cruel hangman, Death, which, from his first coming in, hath ever hoved aloof, and looked toward him, and ever lain in await on him, shall amid

Death the general hangman.

mong all his royalty, and all his main strength, neither kneel before him, nor make him any reverence, nor with any good manner desire him to come forth; but rigorously and fiercely gripe him by the very breast, and make all his bones rattle, and so by long and divers sore torments,

King and queen must come to this same execution.

strike him stark dead in this prison, and then cause his body to be cast into the ground in a foul pit, within some corner of the same,

there to rot and be eaten with the wretched worms of the earth, sending yet his soul out farther unto a more fearful judgment, whereof at his temporal death his success is uncertain; and therefore, though, by God's

A second and more dreadful judgment for princes and all.

grace, not out of good hope, yet for all that, in the meanwhile, in very sore dread and fear, and peradventure, in peril inevitable of eternal

fire, too.

Methinketh therefore, cousin, that, as I told you, this keeping of every man in this wretched world for execution of death, is a very plain imprisonment indeed, and that as I say such, that the greatest king is, in this prison, in much worse case, in all his wealth, than many a man is by the other imprisonment, that is therein sore

and hardly handled. For where some of those lie not there attainted, nor condemned to death, the greatest man of this world, and the most wealthy in this universal prison, is laid in to be kept undoubtedly for death.

VINCENT.—But yet, uncle, in that case, is the other prisoner too; for he is as sure that he shall die too, pardie.

ANTONY.—That is very truth, cousin, indeed, and well objected too. But then must you consider, that he is not in danger of death by reason of that prison into which he is put, peradventure but for a light fray; but his danger of death is by the other imprisonment, by which he is prisoner in the great prison of this whole earth, in which prison all the princes thereof be prisoners as well as he. If a man condemned to death were put up in a large prison, and while his execution were respited, he were, for fighting with his fellows, put up in a strait place (part of the same), he is in danger of death in the strait prison, but not by the being in that, for therein he is but for the fray, but his deadly imprisonment was the other (the larger, I say) into which he was put for death: so the prisoner that you speak of, is beside that narrow prison, a prisoner of the broad world, and all the princes thereof therein prisoners with him. And by that imprisonment, both they and he in like danger of death, not by that strait imprisonment that is commonly called imprisonment, but by that imprisonment which (because of the large walk) men call it liberty, and which prison you thought therefore but a phantasy sophistical to prove it any prison at all.

But now may you, methinketh, very plainly perceive that this whole earth is not only for all the whole kind of man a very plain prison indeed, but also that every man without exception, even those that are most at their liberty therein, and reckon themselves great lords and possessioners of very great pieces thereof, and thereby wax with wantonness so forgetful of their own state that they ween they stand in great wealth,—do stand, for all that indeed, by the reason of their imprisonment in this large prison of the whole earth, in the selfsame

condition that others do stand; which in the narrow prisons, which only be called prisons, and which only be reputed prisons in the opinion of the common people, stand in the most fearful and in the most odious case, that is, to wit, condemned already to death. And now, cousin, if this thing that I tell you seem but a sophistical phantasy to your mind, I would be glad to know what moveth you so to think. For in good faith, as I have told you twice, I am no wiser, but that I verily ween that the thing is thus of very plain truth, in very deed.

Yet few mark
this truth.

CHAPTER XX.



INCENT.—IN good faith, uncle, as for thus far forth, I not only can make with any reason no resistance thereagainst, but also see very clearly proved, that it can be none otherwise; but that every man is in this world a very prisoner, sith we be all put here into a sure hold to be kept till we be put to execution, as folk already condemned all to death. But yet, uncle, that strait keeping, collaring, bolting, and stocking, with lying in straw or on the cold ground (which manner of hard handling is used in these special prisonments that only be commonly called by that name), must needs make that imprisonment which only among the people beareth that name, much more odious and dreadful, than the general imprisonment wherewith we be every man universally prisoned at large, walking where we will round about the wide world. In which broad prison, out of those narrow prisons, there is with the prisoners no such hard handling used.

ANTONY.—I said, I trow cousin, that I purposed to prove you farther yet, that in this general prison, the large prison, I mean, of this whole world, folk be for the time that they be therein as sore handled and as hardly, and wrenched and wronged and breaked in such painful wise, that our hearts (save that we consider it not) have with reason good and great cause to grudge thereagainst; and (as far forth as pertaineth only to the respect of pain) as much horror to conceive against the hard handling that is in this prison, as the other that is in that.

VINCENT.—Indeed, uncle, truth it is that this you said you would prove.

ANTONY.—Nay, so much said I not, cousin, but I said I would if I could, and if I could not, then would I therein give over my part. But that trust I, cousin, I shall not need to do, the thing seemeth me so plain. For, cousin, not only the prince and king, but God chief king and jailor. also (though he have both angels and devils that are jailors under him, yet) the chief jailor over this whole broad prison the world, is, as I take it, God. And that, I suppose, you will grant me too.

VINCENT.—That will I not, uncle, deny.

ANTONY.—If a man be, cousin, committed unto prison, for no cause but to be kept, though there lie never so great charge upon him, yet his keeper, if he be good and honest, is neither so cruel that would pain the man of malice, nor so covetous that would put him to pain to make him seek his friends, and to pay for a pennyworth of ease. Else, if the place be such that he be sure to keep him safe otherwise, or that he can get surety for the recompense of more harm than he seeth he should have, if he scaped; he will never handle him in any such hard fashion as we most abhor imprisonment for. But marry, if the place be such as the keeper cannot otherwise be sure, then is he compelled to keep him after the rate the straiter. And also, if the prisoner be unruly, and fall to fighting with his fellows, or do some other manner of shrewd turn, then useth the keeper to punish him sundry wise in some of such fashions as yourself have spoken of. So is it now, cousin, that God, the

chief jailor, as I say, of this broad prison the world, is neither cruel nor covetous. And this prison is also so sure and so subtly builded, that albeit that it lieth open on every side without any wall in the world, yet *A sure prison.* wander we never so far about therein, the way to get out at shall we never find : so that he needeth neither to collar us, nor to stock us, for any fear of scaping away. And therefore (except he see some other cause than our only keeping for death), he letteth us in the meanwhile (for as long as he list to respite us) walk about in the prison, and do therein what we will, using *Reason and revelation declare God's will.* ourself in such wise, as he hath (by reason and revelation) from time to time told us his pleasure.

And hereof it cometh, lo, that by reason of this favour *Why we for- get this prison.* for a time we wax, as I said, so wanton, that we forget where we be ; weening that we were lords at large, whereas we be indeed (if we would well consider it) even silly poor wretches in prison. For of *What canting in prison.* truth, our very prison this earth is : and yet thereof we cant us out (partly by covenants that we make among us, and part by fraud, and part by violence too) divers parts diversely to ourself, and change the name thereof from the odious name of prison, and call it our own land and livelihood. Upon our *What rule we keep in prison.* prison we build, our prison we garnish with gold, and make it glorious. In this prison they buy and sell, in this prison they brawl and chide, in this prison they run together and fight ; in this they dice, in this they card, in this they pipe and revel, in this they sing and dance. And in this prison many a man reputed right honest, letteth not for his pleasure in the dark privily to play the knave. And thus while God the king, and our chief jailor too, suffereth us and letteth us alone, we ween ourself at liberty, and we abhor the state of those whom we call prisoners, taking ourselves for no prisoners at all.

In which false persuasion of wealth, and forgetfulness of our own wretched state (which is but a wandering about for a while in this prison of the world, till we be

brought unto the execution of death), while we forget with our folly both ourself and our jail, and our under-jailors, angels and devils both, and our chief-jailor God too,—God that forgetteth not us, but seeth us all the while well enough, and being sore discontent to see so shrewd rule kept in the jail (beside that he sendeth the hangman Death, to put to execution here and there, sometimes by the thousands at once), he handleth many of the remnant, whose execution he forbeareth yet unto a farther time, even as hardly, and punisheth them as sore in this common prison of the world, as there are any handled in those special prisons, which for the hard handling used (you say) therein, your heart hath in such horror, and so sore abhorreth.

*God seeth all
well enough,
and punisheth
his prisoners.*

VINCENT.—The remnant will I not gainsay; for methink I see it so indeed. But that God, our chief jailor in this world, useth any such prisonly fashion of punishment, that point I must needs deny. For I neither see him lay any man in the stocks, or strike fetters on his legs, or so much as shut him up in a chamber either.

ANTONY.—Is he no minstrel, cousin, that playeth not on a harp? Maketh no man melody, but he that playeth on a lute? He may be a minstrel and make melody, you wot well, with some other instrument, some strange-fashioned, peradventure, that never was seen before. God our chief jailor, as himself is invisible, so useth he in his punishment invisible instruments: and therefore not of like fashion as the other jailors do, but yet of like effect, and as painful in feeling, as those. For he layeth one of his prisoners with an hot fever, as evil at his ease in a warm bed, as the other jailor layeth his upon the cold ground. He wringeth by the brows with a megrim, he collareth them by the neck with a quinsy, he bolteth them by the arms with a palsy, that they cannot lift their hands to their heads: he manacleth their hands with the gout in their fingers, he wringeth them by the legs with a cramp in their shins, he bindeth them to the bed-board with the crick in the back, and layeth one there along, and as unable to

*God's fetters
and gages, &c.*

rise, as though he lay by the feet fast in the stocks. Some prisoner of another jail singeth, danceth in his two fetters, and feareth not his feet for stumbling at a stone; while God's prisoner, that hath but his one foot fettered with the gout, lieth groaning on a couch, and quaketh and crieth out, if he fear there would fall on his foot no more but a cushion.

And therefore, cousin, as I said, if we consider it well, we shall find this general prison of the whole earth a place in which the prisoners be as sore handled as they be in the other. And even in the other, some make as merry too, as there do some in this that are very merry at large out of that. And surely, like as we ween ourself out of prison now; so if there were some folk born and brought up in a prison, that never came on the wall, nor looked out of the door, nor never heard of other world abroad, but saw some, for shrewd turns done among themselves, locked up in straiter room, and heard them only called prisoners that were so served, and themselves ever called free folk at large; the like opinion would they have there of themselves then, that we have here of ourself now. And when we take ourself for other than prisoners now, as verily we be deceived now as those prisoners should there be then.

VINCENT.—I cannot, uncle, in good faith, say nay, but that you have performed all that you have promised. But yet sith that for all this there appeareth no more, but as they be prisoners, so be we too; and that as some of them be sore handled, so be some of us too; sith we wot well for all this, that when we come to those prisons, we shall not fail to be in a straiter prison than we be now, and to have a door shut upon us where we have none shut on us now, this shall we be sure of at the least wise, if there come no worse; and then may there come worse, you wot well, it cometh there so commonly: wherefore for all this, it is yet little marvel though men's hearts grudge much thereagainst.

ANTONY.—Surely, cousin, in this you say very well. Howbeit somewhat had your words touched me the nearer, if I had said that imprisonment were no displea-

sure at all. But the thing that I say, cousin, for our comfort therein is, that our phantasy frameth us a false opinion, by which we deceive ourself, and take it for sorer than it is. And that do we, by the reason that we take ourself before, for more free than we be, and prisonment for a stranger thing to us than it is indeed. And thus far forth, as I said, have I proved truth in very deed. But now the incommodities that you repeat again (those, I say, that are proper to the imprisonment of their own nature, that is, to wit, to have less room to walk in, and to have the door shut upon us)—these are, methink, so very slender and slight, that in so great a cause as to suffer for God's sake, we might be sore ashamed so much as once to think upon them.

Many a good man there is, you wot well, which without force at all, or any necessity wherefore he should so do, suffereth these two things willingly of his own choice, with much other hardness more,—holy monks, I mean, of the Charterhouse order, such as never pass their cells, but only to the church set fast by their cells, and thence to their cells again; and S. Bridget's order; and S. Clare's much like, and, in a manner all close religious houses. And yet ancrees and ancreesses most specially, all whose whole room is less than a merely large chamber; and yet are they there as well content many long years together, as are other men, and better too, that walk about the world. And therefore you may see, that the loathness of less room, and the door shut upon us, while so many folk are so well content therewith, and will for God's love live so to chuse, is but an horror enhanced of our own phantasy.

And indeed I wist a woman once, that came into a prison to visit of her charity a poor prisoner there, whom she found in a chamber (to say the truth) meetly fair, and at the leastwise it was strong enough. But with mats of straw the prisoner had made it so warm, both under the feet and round about the walls, that in these things for the keeping of his health she was on his behalf glad and very well comforted. But

Our own phan-
tasy deceiveth
us.

Close prison.

A pretty tale
and true.

among many other displeasures that for his sake she was sorry for, one she lamented much in her mind, that he should have the chamber door shut upon him by night, and made fast by the jailor that should shut him in. For by my troth, quod she, if the door should be shut upon me, I would ween it would stop up my breath. At that word of hers, the prisoner laughed in his mind; but he durst not laugh aloud, nor say nothing to her, for somewhat indeed he stood in awe of her, and had his finding there much part of her charity for alms; but he could not but laugh inwardly, while he wist well enough that she used on the inside to shut every night full surely her own chamber to her, both door and windows too, and used not to open them of all the long night. And what difference then, as to the stopping of the breath, whether they were shut up within, or without?

And so surely, cousin, these two things that you speak of, are neither other of so great weight, that in Christ's cause ought to move a Christian man, and the one of the twain is so very a childish phantasy, that in a matter almost of three chips (but if it were in chance of fire) should move any man as much as think thereof.

As for those other accidents of hard handling therein, so mad am I not to say they be no grief; but I say, that our fear may imagine them much greater grief than they be.

And I say, that such as they be, many a man endureth them; yea and many a woman too, that after fare full well.

And then would I wit what determination we take, whether for our Saviour's sake to suffer some pain in our bodies (sith he suffered in his blessed body so great pains for us) or else to give him warning and be at a point, rather utterly to forsake him than suffer any pain at all. He that cometh in his mind unto this latter point (from which kind of unkindness God keep every man!) comfort he none needeth, for he will flee the need; and counsel,

If grace be gone,
counsel availeth
little. I fear, availeth him little, if grace be so far gone from him. But on the other side, if rather than forsake our Saviour, we determine ourself to suffer any pain at all; I cannot then see that

the fear of hard handling should any thing stick with us, and make us so to shrink, as we would rather forsake his faith, than to suffer for his sake so much as imprisonment; sith the handling is neither such in prison, but that many men many years, and many women too, live therewith and sustain it, and afterward yet fare full well. And yet that it may well fortune, that beside the very bare imprisonment, there shall happen us no hard handling at all, nor that same haply but for a short while neither, and yet beside all this peradventure not at all. And specially sith, which of all these ways shall be taken with us, lieth all in his will for whom be content to take it, and which for that mind of ours favoureth us, and will suffer no man to put more pain unto us than he well wotteth we shall be well able to bear. For he will give us the strength thereto himself, as you have heard his promise already by the mouth of St. Paul, *Fidelis Deus, qui non patietur vos tentari supra id quod potestis ferre, sed dat etiam cum tentatione proventum*;—God is faithful, which suffereth you not to be tempted above that you may bear, but giveth also with the temptation a way out.* But now, if we have not lost our faith already, before we come to forsake it for fear; we know very well by our faith, that by the forsaking of our faith, we fall into the state to be cast into the prison of hell, and that can we not tell how soon. But as it may be, that God will suffer us to live a while here upon earth, so may it be, that he will throw us into that dungeon beneath, before the time that the Turk shall once ask us the question. And therefore if we fear imprisonment so sore, we be much more than mad if we fear not most the far more sore. For out of that prison shall no man never get, and in this other shall no man abide but a while. In prison was Joseph, while his brethren were at large, and yet after were his brethren fain to seek upon him for bread.† In prison was Daniel, and the wild lions about him:‡ and yet even there God kept him harmless, and brought him safe out again. If we think, that he will not do the like for us,

* 1 Cor. x.

† Gen. xxxix. et xlii.

‡ Daniel vi.

let us not doubt but he will do for us either the like, or better. For better may he do for us, if he suffer us there to die.

St. John the Baptist was, ye wot well, in prison,* while Herod and Herodias sat full merry at the feast, and the daughter of Herodias delighted them with her dancing, till with her dancing she danced off St. John's head. And now sitteth he with great feast in heaven at God's board, while Herod and Herodias full heavily sit in hell burning both twain, and to make them sport withal, the devil

More such
dancing dam-
sels dance off
men's heads.

with the damsel dance in the fire afore them.

Finally, cousin, to finish this piece with, our Saviour was himself taken prisoner for our sake, and prisoner was he carried, and prisoner was he kept, and prisoner was he brought forth before Annas.† And prisoner from Annas carried unto Caiphas.‡ Then prisoner was he carried from Caiphas unto Pilate, and prisoner was he sent from Pilate to king Herod:§ prisoner from Herod unto Pilate again.|| And so kept as prisoner to the end of his passion. The time of his imprisonment, I grant well, was not long; but as for hard handling (which our hearts most abhor) he had as much in that short while, as many men among them all in much longer time. And surely then, if we consider of what estate he was, and therewith that he was prisoner in such wise for our sake, we shall I trow (but if we be worse than wretched beasts) never so shamefully play the unkind cowards, as for fear of imprisonment sinfully to forsake him; nor so foolish neither, as by forsaking of him, to give him the occasion again to forsake us, and with the avoiding of an easier prison, fall into a worse, and instead of a prison that cannot keep us long, fall into that prison, out of which we can never come, whereas the short imprisonment would win us everlasting liberty.

Great folly by
fleeing an easy
and short pri-
son, to fall into
a worse and a
longer.

* Matth. xiv.

§ Luc. xxiii.

† Ibidem xxvi.

|| Matth. xxvii.

‡ Johan. xviii.

CHAPTER XXI.

The Fear of shameful and painful Death.

INCENT.—FORSOOTH, uncle (our Lord reward you therefor!) if we feared not farther beside imprisonment the terrible dart of shameful and painful death; as for imprisonment, I would verily trust, that remembering those things, which I have here heard of you, rather than I should forsake the faith of our Saviour, I would with the help of grace never shrink thereat. But now are we come, uncle, with much work at the last, unto the last and uttermost point, of the dread that maketh *incursum et dæmonium meridianum*,—this incursion of this midday devil, this open invasion of the Turk, and his persecution against the faith, seem so terrible unto men's minds, that although the respect of God vanquisheth all the remnant of the troubles that we have hitherto perused, as loss of goods, lands and liberty, yet when we remember the terror of shameful and painful death, that point so suddenly putteth us in oblivion of all that should be our comfort, that we feel (all men I fear me for the most part) the fervour of our faith wax so cold, and our hearts so faint, that we find ourself at the point to fall even therefrom for fear.

ANTONY.—To this I say not nay, cousin, but that indeed in this point is the sore pinch. The sorest pinch is in death. And yet you see for all this, that even this point too taketh increase or minishment of dread after the difference of the affections that are before fixed and

rooted in the mind, so farforth, that you see some man set so much by his worldly substance, that he less feareth the loss of his life than the loss of lands: yea some man shall you see that abideth deadly torment, and such as some other had lever die than endure, rather than he would bring out the money that he hath hid. And I doubt not but you have heard of many by right authentic stories, that (some for one cause, some for another) have not letted willingly to suffer death, divers in divers kinds: and some both with despiteful rebuke and painful torment too. And therefore, as I say, we may see, that the affection of the mind toward the increase or decrease of dread, maketh much of the matter.

Many have and do die for affections, as also heretics do.

Now are the affections of men's minds imprinted by divers means. One way, by the mean of the bodily senses moved by such things, pleasant or displeasing, as are outwardly through sensible worldly things offered and objected unto them. And this manner of receiving the impression of affections is common unto men and beasts. Another manner of receiving affections, is by the mean of reason, which both ordinately tempereth those affections, that the bodily five wits imprint, and also disposeth a man many times to some spiritual virtues, very contrary to those affections that are fleshly and sensual. And those reasonable dispositions be affections spiritual and proper to the nature of man, and above the nature of beasts. Now as our ghostly enemy the devil enforceth himself to make us lean to the sensual affections and beastly; so doth Almighty God of his goodness by his Holy Spirit inspire us good motions, with aid and help of his grace, toward the other affections spiritual, and by sundry means instructeth our reason to lean unto them, and not only to receive them as engendered and planted in our soul, but also in such wise water them with the wise advertisement of godly counsel and continual prayer, that they may be habitually radicate, and surely take deep root therein. And, after as the one

Affections some sensual, and some reasonable and spiritual.

Good motions from God, and how.

Note this deep divinity, and the fruit of continual prayer, &c.

kind of affection or the other beareth the strength in our heart, so be we stronger or feebler against the terror of death in this cause. And therefore will we, cousin, essay to consider, what things there are for which we have cause in reason to master that affection fearful and sensual: and though we cannot clean avoid it and put it away, yet in such wise to bridle it at the least that it run not out so far, like an headstrong horse, that spite of our teeth it carry us out unto the devil. Let us therefore now consider and weigh well this thing that we dread so sore, that is to wit, shameful and painful death.

CHAPTER XXII.

Of Death, considered by himself alone, as a bare leaving of this life only.



AND first, I perceive well by these two things that you join unto death, that is to wit, shameful and painful; you would esteem death so much the less, if he should come alone without either shame or pain.

VINCENT.—Without doubt, uncle, a great deal the less. But yet though he should come without them both by himself; whatsoever I would, I wot well, many a man would be for all that, very loath to die.

ANTONY.—That I believe well, cousin, and the more pity it is. For that affection happeth in very few, but that either the cause is lack of faith, lack of hope, or finally lack of wit. They that

Three lacks
make men loath
to die.

believe not the life to come after this, and ween themselves here in wealth, are loath to leave this; for then they think they lose all. And thereof cometh the manifold foolish unfaithful words, which are so rife in over many men's mouths, *This world we know, and the other we know not*, and that some say in sport, and think in earnest, *The devil is not so black as he is painted*, and, *Let him be as black as he will, he is no blacker than a crow*, with many other such foolish phantasies of the same sort.

A Turkish and
heathenish land
where such
words walk.

Some that believe well enough, yet through the lewdness of living, fall out of good hope of salvation, and then though they be loath to die, I very little marvel. Howbeit, some that purpose to mend, and would fain have some time left them longer to bestow somewhat better, may peradventure be loath to die also by-and-by. And that manner loathness (albeit a very good will gladly to die, and to be with God, were in my mind so thankful that it were well able to purchase as full remission both of sin and pain, as peradventure he were like if he lived to purchase in many years' penance), yet will I not say, but that such kind of loathness to die may be before God allowable. Some are there also, that are loath to die, that are yet very glad to die, and long for to be dead.

Good will to die
meritorious.

Some loathness
to die allowable.

VINCENT.—That were, uncle, a very strange case.

ANTONY.—The case, I fear me, cousin, falleth not very often, but yet sometime it doth. As where there is any man of that good mind as St. Paul was, which for the longing that he had to be with God, would fain have been dead, but for the profit of other folk was content to live here in pain, and defer and forbear for the while his inestimable bliss in heaven. *Desiderium habens dissolvi et esse cum Christo, multò magis melius: Permanere autem in carne, necessarium propter vos.** But of all these kinds of folk, cousin, that are loath to die (except the first kind only that lacketh faith), there is, I suppose, none but that except the fear of shame, or sharp pain joined unto death, should be the lot, would else for the bare respect of death

* Philip. i.

alone, let to depart hence with good will in this case of the faith, well witting by his faith, that his death taken for the faith should cleanse him clean of all his sins, and send him straight to heaven. And some of these (namely the last kind) are such, that shame and pain both joined unto death were unlikely to make them loath death, or fear death so sore, but that they would suffer death in this case with good will, sith they know well that the refusing of the faith for any cause in this world (were the cause never so good in sight) should yet sever them from God, with whom (save for other folks' profit) they so fain would be. And charity can it not be, for the profit of the whole world, deadly to displease him that made it.

Some are there, I say also, that are loath to die for lack of wit, which albeit that they believe the world that is to come, and hope also to come thither, yet they love so much the wealth of this world, and such things as delight them therein, that they would fain keep them as long as ever they might, even with tooth and nail. And when they may be suffered in no wise to keep it no longer, but that death taketh them therefrom; then if it may be no better, they will agree to be (as soon as they be hence) hanced up unto heaven, and be with God by-and-by. These folk are as very idiot fools, as he that had kept from his childhood a bag full of How many such idiots be now! cherrystones, and cast such a phantasy thereto, that he would not go from it, for a bigger bag filled full of gold.

These folk fare, cousin, as Æsop telleth in a fable that the snail did. For when Jupiter (whom the poets feign for the great God) invited all the poor worms of the earth unto a great solemn feast that it pleased him (I have forgotten upon what occasion) upon a time to prepare for them, the snail kept her at home and would not come thereat. And when Jupiter asked her after, wherefore she came not at his feast, where he said she should have been welcome, and have fared well, and should have seen a goodly palace, and been delighted with many goodly pleasures: she answered him, that she loved no place so well as her own A proper fable, and well applied.

house. With which answer Jupiter waxed so angry, that he said, sith she loved her house so well, she should never after go from home, but should ever after bear her house upon her back, wheresoever she went. And so hath she done ever since, as they say, and at the least wise I wot well she doth so now, and hath done as long time as I can remember.

VINCENT.—Forsooth, uncle, I would ween the tale were not all feigned. For I think verily, that so much of your tale is true.

ANTONY.—Æsop meant by that feigned fable to touch the folly of such folk, as so set their phantasy upon some small simple pleasure, that they cannot find in their hearts to forbear it, neither for the pleasure of a better man, nor for the gaining of a better thing. By which Forward affection. their fond froward fashion they sometime fall in great indignation, and take thereby no little harm. And surely such Christian folk as by their foolish affection, which they have set like the snail upon their own house here, this earth, cannot for the loathness of leaving that house, find in their heart with their good will to go to the great feast that God prepareth in heaven, and of his goodness so gently calleth them to, be like, I fear me (but if they mend that mind in time), to be served as the snail was, and yet much worse too. For they be like to © wretched snails! have their house here (the earth), bound fast upon their backs for ever, and not walk there-with where they will, as the snail creepeth about with hers, but lie fast bound in the midst with the foul fire of hell about them. For into this folly they bring themselves by their own fault, as the drunken man Drunkards' offences not excusable. bringeth himself into drunkenness, whereby the evil that he doth in his drunkenness is not forgiven him for his folly, but to his pain imputed to his fault.

VINCENT.—Surely, uncle, this seemeth not unlikely, and by their fault they fall into such folly What folly is it, to be worldly wise! indeed. And yet if this be folly indeed, there are then some folk fools, that ween themselves right wise.

ANTONY.—That ween themselves wise? Marry, I never saw fool yet that thought himself other than wise. For as it is one spark of soberness left in a drunken head, when he perceiveth himself drunk, and getteth him fair to bed, so if a fool perceive himself a fool, that point is no folly but a little spark of wit. But now, cousin, as for those kind of fools, sith they be loath to die for the love that they bear to their worldly phantasies, which they should by their death leave behind them and forsake; they that would for that cause rather forsake the faith than die, would rather forsake it than lose their worldly goods, though there were offered them no peril of death at all. And then as touching those that are of that mind, we have, you wot well, said as much as yourself thought sufficient this afternoon here before.

Greatest fools
think themselves
wise.

VINCENT.—Verily, that is, uncle, very true: and now have you rehearsed, as far as I can remember, all the other kinds of them that would be loath to die for any other respect, than the grievous qualities of shame and pain joined unto death. And of all those kinds, except the kind of infidelity, whom no comfort can help, but counsel only to the attaining of faith, which faith must be to the receiving of comfort presupposed and made ready before, as you shewed in the beginning of our communication the first day that we talked of the matter; but else, I say, except that one kind, there is none of the remnant of those that were before untouched, which were likely to forsake their faith in this persecution for the fear and dread of death, save for those grievous qualities (pain I mean, and shame), that they see well would come therewith. And therefore, uncle, I pray you give us some comfort against those twain. For in good faith, if death should come without them in such a case as this is, where by the losing of this life we should find a far better: mine own reason giveth me, that save for the other griefs going before the change, there would no man that wit hath, any thing stick at all.

ANTONY.—Yes (peradventure) suddenly before they gather their wits unto them, and therefore well weigh the

matter. But they, cousin, that will consider the matter well, reason grounded upon the foundation of faith, shall shew them very great substantial causes, for which the dread of those grievous qualities that they see shall come with death (shame, I mean, and pain also) shall not so sore abash them, as sinfully to drive them therefrom. For the proof whereof let us first begin at the consideration of the shame.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Of the Shame that is joined with the Death in the Persecution for the Faith.



OW can any faithful wise man dread the death so sore for any respect of shame, when his reason and his faith together may shortly make him perceive, that there is therein no piece of very shame at all? For how can that death be shameful that is

To die so, no
shame but
glory.

So die not
heretics.

glorious? Or how can it be but glorious to die for the faith of Christ (if we die both for the faith, and in the faith joined with hope and charity), while the Scripture so plainly saith, *Pretiosa in conspectu Domini mors sanc-*

torum ejus,—Precious is in the sight of God, the death of his saints.* Now if the death of his saints be glorious in the sight of God, it can never be shameful in very deed, how shameful so ever it seem here in the sight of men. For here we may see and be sure, that not at the death of

* Psal. cxv.

St. Stephen only * (to whom it liked him to shew himself with the heaven open over his head) but at the death also of every man that so dieth for the faith, God with his heavenly company beholdeth his whole passion, and verily looketh on.†

Now if it so were, cousin, that you should be brought through the broad high street of a great long city, and that all along the way that you were going, there were on the one side of the way a rabble of ragged beggars and madmen that would despise you and dispraise you with all the shameful names that they could call you, and all the villanous words that they could say to you: and that there were then along the other side of the same street where you should come by a goodly company standing in a fair range, a row of wise and worshipful folk, allowing and commending you, more than fifteen times as many as that rabble of ragged beggars and railing madmen are: would you let your way by your will, weening that you went unto your shame for the shameful jesting and railing of those mad foolish wretches, or hold on your way with a good cheer and a glad heart, thinking yourself much honoured by the laud and approbation of that other honourable sort?

A goodly comparison.

None but railing rabbles of frantic wretches mock and despise God's martyrs.

VINCENT.—Nay by my troth, uncle, there is no doubt, but I would much regard the commendation of those commendable folk, and not regard of a rush the railing of all these ribalds.

ANTONY.—Then, cousin, can there no man that hath faith, account himself shamed here by any manner death that he suffereth for the faith of Christ, while how vile and how shameful soever it seem in the sight here of a few worldly wretches, it is allowed and approved for very precious and honourable in the sight of God, and all the glorious company of heaven, which as perfectly stand and behold it, as these peevish people do, and are in number more than an hundred to one: and of that hundred, every one an hundred times more to be regarded and esteemed, than of the other an hundred such whole

* Act. vii.

† 1 Cor. iv.

rabbles. And now if a man would be so mad, as for fear of the rebuke that he should have of such rebukeful beasts, he would be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ: then with fleeing from a shadow of shame, he should fall into a very shame and a deadly painful shame indeed. For then hath our Saviour made a sure promise, that he will shew himself ashamed of that man before the Father of Heaven and all his holy angels, saying: *Qui me erubuerit et meos sermones, hunc Filius Hominis erubescet, quum venerit in majestate sua, et Patris, et sanctorum Angelorum*;—He that is ashamed of me and my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he shall come in the majesty of himself, and of his Father, and of the holy Angels.* And

Here is very
shameful shame
indeed.

what manner a shameful shame shall that be then? If a man's cheeks glow sometimes for shame in this world, they will fall on fire for shame when Christ shall shew himself ashamed of them there.

To suffer the thing for Christ's faith, that we worldly wretched fools ween were villany and shame, the blessed Apostles reckoned for great glory. For they, when they were with despite and shame scourged, and thereupon commanded to speak no more of the name of Christ, went their way from the council joyful and glad that God had vouchsafed to do them the worship, to suffer shameful despite for the name of Jesu. And so proud were they of that shame and villanous pain put unto them, that for all the forbidding of that great council assembled, they ceased not every day to preach out the name of Jesu still, not in the Temple only, out of which they were fet and whipped for the same before, but also to double it with, went preaching that name about from house to house too.

I would, sith we regard so greatly the estimation of worldly folk, we would among many naughty things that they use, regard also some such as are good. For it is a manner among them in many places, that some by handicraft, some by merchandise, some by other kind of living, rise and come forward in the world.

Another com-
parison.

* Luc. ix.

And commonly folk are in youth set forth to convenient masters, under whom they be brought up and grow. But now whensoever they find a servant such, as disdaineth to do such things as he, that his master, did while he was servant himself; that servant every man accounteth for a proud unthrift, never like to come to good proof. Let us so mark and consider this, and weigh well therewithal, that our master Christ, not the master only, but the maker too of all this whole world, was not so proud to disdain for our sakes the most villanous and most shameful death after the worldly account that then was used in the world, and the most despiteful mocking therewith joined to most grievous pain, as crowning him with sharp thorns that the blood ran down about his face: then they gave him a reed in his hand for a sceptre, and kneeled down to him, and saluted him like a king in scorn, and beat then the reed upon the sharp thorns about his holy head. Now saith our Saviour, that the disciple or servant is not above his Master.* And therefore sith our Master endured so many kinds of painful shame, very proud beasts may we well think ourself, if we disdain to do as our Master did: and whereas he through shame ascended into glory,† we would be so mad, that we rather will fall into everlasting shame, both before heaven and hell, than for fear of a short worldly shame, to follow him into everlasting glory.

* Luc. vi.

† Johan. xiii.

CHAPTER XXIV.

*Of painful Death to be suffered in the Turk's Persecution
for the Faith.*



INCENT.—IN good faith, uncle, as for the shame, ye shall need to take no more pain. For I suppose surely, that any man that hath reason in his head shall hold himself satisfied with this. But of truth, uncle, all the pinch is in the pain. For as for shame, I perceive well now, a man may with wisdom so master it, that it shall nothing move him at all, so farforth, that it is almost in every country become a common proverb, that shame is as it is taken. But by God, uncle, all the wisdom in this world can never so master pain, but that pain will be painful, spite of all the wit in this world.

ANTONY.—Truth is it, cousin, that no man can with all the reason he hath, in such wise change the nature of pain, that in the having of pain he feel it not. For, but How pain is no pain. if it be felt, it is pardie, no pain. And that is the natural cause, cousin, for which a man may have his leg stricken off by the knee and grieve him not, if his head be off but half an hour before. But reason may make a reasonable man (though he would not be so foolish as causeless to fall therein) yet upon good causes, either of gaining some kind of great profit, or avoiding some kind of great loss, or eschewing thereby the suffering of far greater pain, not to shrink therefrom, and refuse it to his more hurt and harm, but for his far greater advantage and commodity, content and glad to

sustain it. And this doth reason alone in many cases, where it hath much less help to take hold of, than it hath in this matter of faith. For well you wot, to take a sour and a bitter potion is great grief and displeasure, and to be lanced and to have the flesh cut is no little pain. Now when such things shall be ministered unto a child, or to some childish man either, they will by their own wills rather let their sickness or their sore grow on to their more grief till it become incurable, than abide the pain of the cutting in time, and that for faint heart, joined with lack of discretion. But a man that hath more wisdom, though he would without cause no more abide the pain willingly, than would the other: yet sith reason sheweth him what good he shall have by the suffering, and what harm by the refusing, this maketh him well content, and glad also to take it.

Now then, if reason alone be sufficient to move a man to take pain for the gaining of some worldly rest or pleasure, and for the avoiding of another pain, though peradventure more, yet durable but for a short season: why should not reason grounded upon the sure foundation of faith, and holpen also forward with aid of God's grace (as it is ever ready undoubtedly, when folk for a good mind in God's name common together thereon, our Saviour saying himself: *Ubi sunt duo vel tres congregati in nomine meo, ibi et ego sum in medio eorum*,—Where there are two or three gathered together in my name, there am I also even in the very midst of them*), why should not then reason, I say, thus furthered with faith and grace, be much more able to engender in us first such an affection, and after by long and deep meditation thereof, so to continue that affection, that it shall turn into an habitual fast and deep-rooted purpose of patient suffering the painful death of this body here in earth, for the gaining of everlasting wealthy life in heaven, and avoiding of everlasting painful death in hell?

VINCENT.—By my troth, uncle, words can I none find that should have any reason with them (faith alway presupposed, as you protested in the beginning for a ground),

Reason can do
much by faith
and grace.

* Matth. xviii.

words, I say, can I none find, wherewith I might reasonably counterplead this that you have said here already.

*A fable of
Æsop*

But yet I remember the fable that Æsop telleth of a great old hart that had fled from a little bitch, which had made sure after him, and chased him so long that she had lost him, and as he hoped, more than half given him over. By occasion thereof, having then some time to talk, and meeting with another of his fellows, he fell in deliberation with him, what were best for him to do, whether to run on still and flee farther from her, or turn again and fight with her. Whereunto the other hart advised him to flee no farther lest the bitch might hap to find him again at such time, as he should with the labour of farther fleeing be fallen out of breath and thereby all out of strength too, and so should he be killed lying where he could not stir him, whereas if he would turn and fight he were in no peril at all. For the man with whom she hunteth is more than a mile behind her, and she is but a little body scant half so much as thou, and thy horns may thrust her through before she can touch thy flesh by more than ten times her tooth length. Now by my troth, quod the other hart, I like your counsel well, and methink that the thing is even soothly such as you say. But I fear me, when I hear once that urchin bitch bark, I shall fall to my feet and forget altogether. But yet an you will go back with me, then methink we shall be strong enough against that one bitch, between us both. Whereunto the other hart agreed, and so they both appointed them thereon. (Here it must

Hunting noted. be known of some man that can skill of hunting, whether that we mistake not our terms.

For then are we utterly ashamed, ye wot well. And I am so conning, that I cannot tell whether among them a bitch be a bitch or no, but as I remember, she is no bitch, but a brach. This is an high point in a low house. Beware of barking, for there lacketh another hunting term. At a fox it is called crying. I wot not what they call it at an hart, but it shall make no matter.)* But even as they were

* What is within the parentheses does not occur in the folio edition of the author's works.

about to bask them forward to it, the bitch had found the foot again, and on she came yearning toward the place. Whom as soon as the harts heard, they go to both twain apace. And in good faith, uncle, even so I fear me, it would fare by myself and many other too, which though we think it reason that you say, and in our minds agree that we should do as you say, yea and do peradventure think also, that we would indeed do as you say: yet as soon as we should once hear these hell hounds, these Turks come yelping and bawling upon us, our hearts should soon fall as clean from us, as those other harts flee from the hounds.

Great harts flee
from a bitch.

ANTONY.—Cousin, in those days that Æsop speaketh of, though those harts and other brute beasts more, had (if he say sooth) the power to speak and talk, and in their talking, power to talk reason too: yet to follow reason, and rule themselves thereby, thereto had they never given them the power. And in good faith, cousin, as for such things as pertain towards the conducting of reasonable men to salvation, I think without the help of grace, men's reasoning shall do little more. But then are we sure, as I said afore, that as for grace, if we desire it, God is at such reasoning alway present, and very ready to give it: and but if that men will afterward willingly cast it away, he is ever still as ready to keep it, and from time to time glad to increase it. And therefore biddeth us our Lord by the mouth of the prophet, that we should not be like such brutish and unreasonable beasts, as were those harts, and as are horses and mules. *Nolite fieri sicut equus et mulus, quibus non est intellectus*,—Be not like a horse and a mule, that hath no understanding.*

Reason without
grace can do
little.

Grace is ever
ready.

Men must be
reasonable, and
not brutish
beasts.

And therefore, cousin, let us never dread but that if we will apply our minds to the gathering of comfort and courage against such persecutions, and hear reason, and let it sink into our heart, and call it not out again, vomit it not up, nor even there choke it up and stifle it with pampering in and stuffing up our stomachs

An evil surfeit.

with a surfeit of worldly vanities: God shall so well work therewith, that we shall find great strength therein, and not in such wise have all such shameful cowardous hearts, as to forsake our Saviour, and thereby lose our own salvation, and run into eternal fire, for fear of death joined therewith, though bitter and sharp, yet short for all that, and in a manner a momentary pain.

VINCENT.—Every man, uncle, naturally grudgeth at pain, and is very loath to come to it.

ANTONY.—That is very truth, nor no man biddeth any man to go run into it. But that if he be taken, and may not flee, then we say that reason plainly telleth us, that we should rather suffer and endure the loss and the shorter here, than in hell the sorer, and so far the longer too.

VINCENT.—I heard, uncle, of late, where such a reason was made, as you make me now, which reason seemeth undoubted and inevitable unto me: yet heard I late, as I say, a man answer it thus. He said, that if a man in his persecution should stand still in the confession of his

An objection.

faith, and thereby fall into painful tormentry, he might peradventure hap for the sharpness and bitterness of the pain, to forsake the Saviour even in the midst, and die there with his sin, and so be damned for ever; whereas by the forsaking of the faith in the beginning betime, and for the time, and yet not but in word neither, keeping it still nevertheless in his heart, a man may save himself from that painful death, and after ask mercy, and have it, and live long, and do many good deeds, and be saved as St. Peter was.

ANTONY.—That man's reason, cousin, is like a three-

A tottering stool that many sit on now.

footed stool, so tottering on every side, that whoso sit thereon may soon take a foul fall.

For those are the three feet of this tottering stool: fantastical fear, false faith, false flattering hope.

Fantastical fear.

First, this is a fantastical fear, that the man conceiveth that it should be perilous to stand in the confession of the beginning, lest he might afterwards through the bitterness of pain fall to the forsaking, and so die there in the pain therewith out of hand, and thereby be utterly damned: as though that, if a man by

pain were overcome, and so forsook his faith, God could not, or would not, as well give him grace to repent again, and thereupon give him forgiveness, as him that forsook his faith in the beginning, and did set so little by him, that he would rather forsake him than suffer for his sake any manner pain at all: as though the more pain that a man taketh for God's sake, the worse would God be to him. If this reason were not unreasonable, then should our Saviour not have said, as he did: *Nolite timere eos qui occidunt corpus, et post hæc non habent amplius quid faciant*,—Fear not them that may kill the body, and after that have nothing that they can do farther.* For he should by this reason have said: Dread and fear them that may slay the body; for they may by the torment of painful death (but if thou forsake me betimes in the beginning and so save thy life, and get of me thy pardon and forgiveness after) make thee peradventure forsake me too late, and so be damned for ever. The second foot of this tottering stool, is a false faith. For it is but a feigned faith for a man to say to God ^{false and feigned faith.} secretly that he believeth him, trusteth him, and loveth him; and then openly, where he should to God's honour tell the same tale, and thereby prove that he doth so, there to God's dishonour (as much as in him is) flatter God's enemies, and do them pleasure and worldly worship, with the forsaking of God's faith before the world: and he is either faithless in his heart too, or else wotteth well that he doth God this despite, even before his own face. For except he lack faith, he cannot but know that our Lord is everywhere present; and while he so shamefully forsaketh him, full angrily looketh on.

The third part of this tottering stool, is false ^{false flattering hope.} flattering hope. For sith the thing that he doth, when he forsaketh his faith for fear, is by the mouth of God (upon the pain of eternal death) forbidden, though the goodness of God forgiveth many folk the fault, yet to be the bolder in offending for the hope of forgiving, is a very false pestilent hope, wherewith a man flattereth himself toward his own destruction. He that in a sudden braid

* Luc. xii. Matth. x.

A lawful hope. for fear, or other affection unadvisedly falleth, and after in labouring to rise again, comforteth himself with hope of God's gracious forgiveness, walketh in the ready way toward his salvation. But he that, with the hope of God's mercy to follow, doth encourage him-

A dangerous hope. self to sin, and therewith offendeth God first (I have no power to shut the hand of God from giving out his pardon where he list, nor would, if I could, but rather help to pray therefor, but yet) I very sore fear, that such a man may miss the grace to require it in such effectual wise, as to have it granted. Nor I cannot suddenly now remember any sample or promise expressed in Holy Scripture, that the offender in such a kind shall have the grace offered after in such wise to seek for pardon, that God hath (by his other promises of remission promised to the penitents) bound himself to grant it. But

Presumption. this kind of presumption under pretext of hope, seemeth rather to draw near on the one side as despair doth on the other side, toward the abominable sin of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. Against which sin concerning either the impossibility, or, at the least, the great difficulty of forgiveness, our Saviour hath shewed himself in the twelfth chapter of St. Matthew, and in the third of St. Mark, where he saith, that blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall never be forgiven, neither in this world, nor in the world to come.*

Of St. Peter's fall and rising again. And where the man that you spake of, took in his reason a sample of St. Peter which forsook our Saviour, and gat forgiveness after; let him consider again on the other side, that he forsook him not upon the boldness of any such sinful trust, but was overcome and vanquished upon a sudden fear. And yet by that forsaking St. Peter wan but little. For he did but delay his trouble for a little while, you wot well. For beside that he repented forthwith very sore that he so had done, and wept therefor by-and-by full bitterly, he came forth at the Whitsuntide ensuing, and confessed his Master again,† and soon after that he was imprisoned

* Matth. xii. Marc. iii.

† Act. ii.

therefor: and not ceasing so, was thereupon scourged for the confession of his faith, and yet after that imprisoned again afresh; and being from thence delivered, stinted not to preach on still, until that after manifold labours, marvels, and troubles, he was at Rome crucified, and with cruel torment slain.* And in likewise I ween, I might in a manner well warrant that there shall no man (which denieth our Saviour once, and after attaineth remission) scape through that denying, one penny the better cheap, but that he shall, ere he come in heaven, full surely pay therefor.

VINCENT.—He shall peradventure, uncle, work it out afterward, in the fruitful works of penance, prayer, and almsdeeds done in true faith, and due charity, and attain in such wise forgiveness well enough.

ANTONY.—All his forgiveness goeth, cousin, you see well, but by perhaps. But as it may be, perhaps yea: so it may be, perhaps nay. And where is he then? And yet you wot well, by no manner hap he shall never hap finally to scape from death, for fear of which he forsook his faith.

VINCENT.—No, but he may die his natural death, and scape that violent death, and then he saveth himself from much pain, and so winneth therewith much ease. For evermore a violent death is painful.

ANTONY.—Peradventure he shall not avoid a violent death thereby. For God is without doubt displeased, and can bring him shortly to a death as violent by some other way. Howbeit, I see well that you reckon that whoso dieth a natural death, dieth like a wanton even all at his ease. You make me remember a man that was once in a galley subtle with us on the sea, which while the sea was sore wrought, and the waves rose very high, and he came never on the sea afore, and lay tossed hither and thither, the poor soul groaned sore, and for pain he thought he would very fain be dead, and ever he wished, Would God I were on land, that I might die in rest! The waves so troubled him there, with tossing him up and down, to and fro, that

*Of one that
would die at
ease.*

* Act. v.

he thought that trouble letted him to die, because the waves would not let him rest : but if he might get once to land, he thought he should then die there even at his ease.

VINCENT.—Nay, uncle, this is no doubt, but that death is to every man painful. But yet is not the natural death so painful, as the violent.

Of natural and violent death.

ANTONY.—By my troth, cousin, methinketh that the death which men call commonly natural, is a violent death to every man whom it fetcheth hence by force against his will, and that is every man which, when he dieth, is loath to die, and fain would yet live longer if he might. Howbeit, how small the pain is in the natural death, cousin, fain would I wit who hath told you. As far as I can perceive, those folk that commonly depart of their natural death, have ever one

The pain of natural death.

disease and sickness or other, whereof if the pain of the whole week or twain, in which they lie pining in their bed, were gathered together into short a time, as a man hath his pain that dieth a violent death ; it would, I ween, make double the pain that it is. So that he that naturally dieth, after suffereth more pain than less, though he suffer it in a longer time. And then would many a man be more loath to suffer so long in lingering pain, than with a sharper to be sooner rid. And yet lieth many a man more days than one in well near as great pain continually, as is the pain that with the violent death riddeth the man in less than half an hour ; except a man would ween that whereas the pain is great, to have a knife cut his flesh in the outside from the skin inward, the pain would be much less, if the knife might on the inside begin, and cut from the midst outward. Some we hear in their deathbeds complain, that they think they feel sharp knives cut a-two their heartstrings. Some cry out and think they feel within the brainpan, their head pricked even full of pins. And they that lie in a pleurisy think that every time they cough, they feel a sharp sword swap them to the heart.

CHAPTER XXV.

The consideration of the Pain of Hell, in which we fall, if we forsake our Saviour, may make us set all the painful death of the world at right nought.



OWBEIT, what should we need to make any such comparison between the natural death and the violent? For the matter that we be in hand with here may put it out of doubt, that he which for fear of the violent death forsaketh the faith of Christ, putteth himself in the peril to find his natural death more painful a thousand times. For his natural death hath his everlasting pain so suddenly knit unto it, that there is not one moment of an hour Of everlasting death and pain. between, but the end of the one is the beginning of the other that after shall never have end. And therefore was it not without great cause, that Christ gave us so good warning before, when he said as St. Luke rehearseth: *Dico vobis amicis meis, ne terreamini ab iis qui occidunt corpus, et post hæc non habent amplius quid faciant. Ostendam autem vobis quem timeatis. Timete eum, qui postquam occiderit, habet potestatem mittere in gehennam: Ita dico vobis, hunc timeate,*—I say to you that are my friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and which when that is done, are able to do no more. But I shall shew you, whom you shall fear: Fear him, that when he hath killed, hath in his power farther to cast him, whom he killeth, into everlasting fire: So I

say to you, be afraid of him.* God meaneth not here, that we should nothing dread at all any man that can but kill the body, but he meaneth that we should not in such wise dread any such, that we should for dread of them, displease him that can everlastingly kill both body and soul with a death ever dying, and that shall yet never die. And therefore he addeth and repeateth in the end again, the fear that we should have of him, and saith: *Ita dico vobis, hunc timete*,—So I say to you, fear him.

Oh, good God! cousin, if a man would well weigh these words and let them sink, as they should do, down deep into his heart, and often bethink himself thereon, it would, I doubt not, be able enough, to make us set at nought all the great Turk's threats, and esteem him not a straw, but well content to endure all the pain that all the world could put upon us (for so short while as all they were able to make us dwell therein) rather than by the shrinking from those pains (though never so sharp, yet but short) to cast ourself into the pain of hell an hundred thousand times more intolerable, and whereof there shall

never come an end. A woful death is that death, in which folk shall evermore be dying, and never can once be dead. Whereof the Scripture saith, *Desiderabunt mori, et mors fugiet ab eis*,—They shall call, and cry for death, and death shall flee from them.† Oh, good Lord, if one of them were now put in the choice of both, they would rather suffer the whole year together the most terrible death that all the Turks in Turkey could devise, than the death that they lie in for the space of half an hour. In how wretched folly fall then these faithless or feeble faithed folk, that to avoid the pain so far the less and so short, fall in the stead thereof into pain a thousand thousand times more horrible, and of which terrible torment, they be sure they shall never have end! This matter, cousin, lacketh, as I believe, but either full faith or sufficient minding. For I think, on my faith, if we have the grace verily to believe it, and often to think well thereon, the fear of all the Turk's persecution (with all that this midday devil were able to

* Luc. xii.

† Apocal. ix.

make them do in the forcing us to forsake our faith) should never be able to turn us.

VINCENT.—By my troth, uncle, I think it is as you say. For sure if we would as oft think on these pains of hell, as we be very loath to do, and seek us peevish pastimes of purpose to put such heavy things out of our thought: this one point alone were able enough to make, I think, many a martyr.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The Consideration of the Joys of Heaven should make us for Christ's sake abide and endure any painful Death.



ANTONY.—FORSOOTH, cousin, if we were such as we should be, I would scant for very shame (in exhortation to the keeping of Christ's faith) speak of the pains of hell. I would rather put us in mind of the joys of heaven, the pleasure whereof we should be more glad to get, than we should be to flee and scape all the pains in hell. But surely God in that thing, wherein he may seem most rigorous, is marvellous merciful to us, and that is (which many men would little ween) in that he provided hell. For I suppose very surely, cousin, that many a man and woman too, of whom there sit some now, and more shall hereafter sit, full gloriously crowned in heaven, had they not first been afraid of hell, would toward heaven never have set foot forward. But yet undoubtedly were it so, that we could as well conceive in our hearts the

God merciful
in providing
hell.

marvellous joys of heaven, as we conceive the fearful pains of hell (howbeit sufficiently we can conceive neither), but if we could in our imagination draw as much toward the perceiving of the one, as we may toward the consideration of the other, we would not fail to be far more moved and stirred to the suffering for Christ's sake in the world, for the winning of those heavenly joys, than for the eschewing of all these infernal pains. But forasmuch as the fleshly pleasures be far less pleasant, than the fleshly pains are painful; therefore we fleshly folk that are so drowned in these fleshly pleasures, and in the desire thereof, that we can have almost no manner savour or taste in any pleasure spiritual, have no cause to marvel that our fleshly affections be more abated and refrained

Fleshly pleasures let the taste of heavenly joys.

by the dread and terror of hell, than affections spiritual imprinted in us, and pricked forward with the desire and joyful hope of heaven.

Howbeit if we would somewhat set less by the filthy voluptuous appetites of the flesh, and would by withdrawing from them, with help of prayer through the grace of God, draw nearer to the secret inward pleasure of the spirit, we should by the little sipping that our hearts should have here now, and that sudden taste thereof, have such an estimation of the incomparable and uncogitable joy, that we shall have (if we will) in heaven by the very full draught thereof, whereof it is written, *Satiabor quum apparuerit gloria tua*,—I shall be satiate, satisfied or fulfilled, when thy glory, good Lord, shall appear,* that is to wit, with the fruition of the sight of God's glorious majesty face to face: that the desire, expectation, and heavenly hope thereof, shall more encourage us, and make us strong to suffer and sustain for the love of God and salvation of our soul, than ever we could be moved to suffer here worldly pain by the terrible dread of all the horrible pains that damned wretches have in hell.

Wherefore in the meantime for lack of such experimental taste, as God giveth here sometime to some of his special servants, to the intent we may draw toward the

* Psal. xvi.

spiritual exercise too, for which spiritual exercise God with that gift, as with an earnest-penny of their whole reward after in heaven, comforteth them here in earth: let us not so much with looking to have described what manner of joys they shall be, as with hearing what our Lord telleth us in Holy Scripture,* how marvellous great they shall be, labour by prayer to conceive in our hearts such a fervent longing for them, that we may for attaining to them, utterly set at nought all fleshly delight, all worldly pleasures, all earthly losses, all bodily torments and pain. Howbeit some things are there in Scripture, expressed of the manner of the pleasures and joys that we shall have in heaven, as where, *Fulgebunt justi sicut sol, et qui erudiunt ad justitiam, tanquam scintillæ in arundinetis discurrent,*—Righteous men shall shine as the sun, and shall run about like sparks of fire among reeds.†

The joys of heaven.

Now tell some carnal-minded man of this manner of pleasure, and he shall take little pleasure therein, and say he careth not to have his flesh shine, he, nor like a spark of fire to skip about in the sky. Tell him, that his body shall be impassible, and never feel harm: yet if he think then therewith, that he shall never be an hungered, nor athirst, and shall thereby forbear all his pleasure of eating and drinking, and that he shall never have lust to sleep, and thereby lose the pleasure that he was wont to take in slugging, and that men and women shall there live together as angels, without any manner mind or motion unto the carnal act of generation, and that he shall thereby not use there his old filthy voluptuous fashion, he will say, he is better at ease already, and would not give this world for that. For as St. Paul saith, *Animalis homo non percipit ea quæ sunt Spiritus Dei, stultitia enim est illi,*—A carnal man feeleth not the things that be of the Spirit of God, for it is foolishness to him.‡ But when the time shall come, that these foul filthy pleasures shall be so taken from him, that it shall abhor his heart once to think on them, whereof every

Carnal men set little by the joys of heaven.

How many say so now.

In sickness all pleasures cease.

* Esai. lxiv. ; 1 Cor. iv.

† Sap. iii.

‡ 1 Cor. ii.

man hath among a certain shadow of experience in the fervent grief of a sore painful sickness, while the stomach can scant abide to look upon any meat, and as for the acts of the other foul filthy lust, is ready to vomit, if it happen him to think thereon. When men shall, I say, after this life, feel that horrible abomination in their heart at the remembrance of these voluptuous pleasures (of which abomination sickness hath here a shadow) for

Sickness a shadow of hell-pain. which voluptuous pleasures he would here be loath to change with the joys of heaven.

When he shall, I say, after this life have his fleshly pleasures in abomination, and shall of those heavenly joys, which he set here so little by, have there a glimmering, though far from a perfect sight: oh, good God! how fain will he then be, with how good will and how glad will he then give this whole world, if it were his, to have the feeling of some little part of these joys! And therefore let us all that we can, conceive now such delight in the consideration of them as we should have often in our eyes by reading, often in our ears by hearing, often in our mouths by rehearsing, often in our hearts by meditation and thinking upon those joyful words of Holy Scripture, by which we learn, how wonderful huge and great those spiritual heavenly joys are, of which our carnal hearts have so feeble and so faint a feeling, and our dull worldly wits so little able to conceive so much as a shadow of the right imagination. A shadow I say: for as for the thing as it is, that cannot only no fleshly carnal phantasy conceive, but over that, no spiritual ghostly person (peradventure) neither, that here is living still in this world. For sith the very substance essential of all the celestial joys standeth in blessed beholding of the glorious Godhead face to face, there may no man presume or look to attain it in this life. For God hath so said himself, *Non videbit me homo, et vivet,* —There shall no man here living, behold me.* And therefore we may well know, that for the state of this life, we be not only shut from the fruition of the bliss of heaven, but also that

No man can see God, nor know the joys of heaven here.

the very best man living here upon earth (the best man, I mean, being no more but a man) cannot, I ween, attain the right imagination thereof, but those that are very virtuous, are yet in a manner as far therefrom, as the born blind man from the right imagination of colours.

The words that St. Paul rehearseth of the prophet Esay prophesying of Christ's incarnation, may properly be verified by the joys of heaven: *Oculus non vidit, nec auris audivit, nec in cor hominis ascendit, quæ præparavit Deus diligentibus se*,*—For surely for the state of this world, the joys of heaven are by man's mouth unspeakable, to man's ears not audible, to man's heart uncogitable, so farforth excel they all that ever any man can by natural possibility think on. And yet where the joys of heaven be such, prepared for every saved soul, our Lord saith yet by the mouth of St. John, that he will give his holy martyrs, that suffer for his sake, many a special kind of joy. For he saith,—*Vincenti dabo edere de ligno vitæ*,—To him that overcometh I shall give him to eat of the tree of life.† And also he that overcometh shall be clothed in white clothes, and I shall confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. And also he saith, Fear none of those things that thou shalt suffer, &c.; but be faithful unto the death, and I shall give thee the crown of life. He that overcometh, shall not be hurt of the second death. He saith also, *Vincenti dabo manna absconditum, et dabo illi calculum conditum, et in calculo nomen novum scriptum, quod nemo scit nisi qui accipit*,—To him that overcometh, will I give manna secret and hid. And I will give him a white suffrage, and in his suffrage a new name written, which no man knoweth but he that receiveth it. They used of old in Greece (where St. John did write) to elect and choose men unto honourable rooms, and every man's assent was called his suffrage, which in some places was by the voices, in some places by hands, and one kind of those suffrages was by certain things that are in Latin called *calculi*, because that in some places they used thereto

Martyrs have special prerogatives.

A suffrage.

* Isaïæ vi. ; 1 Cor. ii.

† Apocal. ii.

round stones. Now saith our Lord that unto him which overcometh he will give a white suffrage.* For those that wore white signified approving, as the black signified reprovng. And in these suffrages did they use to write the name of him to whom they gave their voice. And now saith our Lord, that to him that overcometh he will in the suffrage give him a new name, which no man knoweth but he that receiveth it. He saith also: He that over-

Martyrs be pillars in God's Church.

cometh, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out thereof. And I shall write upon him the name

of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem which descendeth from heaven from my God, and I shall write upon him also my new name. If we would dilate and were able to declare these special gifts, with yet other more specified in the second and third chapter of the Apocalypse; there would it appear how

All these joys pass all worldly comforts.

far these heavenly joys shall surmount above all the comfort that ever came in the mind of any man living here upon earth. The blessed

apostle St. Paul, that suffered so many perils, and so many passions, he that saith of himself that he hath been *In laboribus pluribus, in carceribus abundantius, in plagis, &c.*—In many labours, in prison oftner than other, in stripes above measure, at point of death often times. Of the Jews had I five times forty stripes save one: thrice have I been beaten with rods, once was I stoned: thrice have I been in shipwreck: a day and a night was I in the depth of the sea: in my journies oft have I been in peril of floods, in peril of thieves, in perils by the Jews, in perils by the Paynims, in perils in the city, in perils in desert, in perils in the sea, in perils by false brethren, in labour and misery, in many nights' watch, in hunger and thirst, in many fastings, in cold and nakedness, beside these things that are outward my daily instant labour, I mean my care and solicitude about all the churches.† And yet saith he more of his tribulations, which for length I let pass. This blessed apostle, I say, for all these tribulations that himself suffered in the continuance of so many

* Apocal. iii.

† 2 Cor.^e xi.

years, calleth yet all the tribulations of this world but light and short as a moment in respect of the weighty glory that it after this world winneth us. *Id enim quod in præsentī est momentaneum, et leve tribulationis nostræ, supra modum in sublimitate æternum gloriæ pondus operatur in nobis, non contemplantibus nobis quæ videntur, sed quæ non videntur. Quæ enim videntur, temporalia sunt, quæ autem non videntur, æterna sunt,*—This same short and momentary tribulation of ours that is in this present time, worketh within us the weight of glory above measure—in *sublimitate*—on high, we beholding not those things that we see, but those things that we see not. For these things that we see, be but temporal things: but those things that are not seen are eternal.* Now to this great glory can there no man come headless. Our head is Christ,† and therefore to him must we be joined, and as members of his must we follow him, if we will come thither. He is our guide to guide us thither, and is entered in before us. And he therefore that will enter in after, *Debet sicut ille ambulavit, et ipse ambulare,*—The same way that Christ walked, the same way must he walk.‡ And what was the way by which he walked into heaven, himself sheweth what way it was that his Father had provided for him, where he said unto the two disciples, going toward the castle of Emaus, *Nonne hæc oportuit pati Christum, et ita intrare in gloriam suam?*—Know ye not that, Christ must suffer passion, and by that way enter into his kingdom?§ Who can for very shame desire to enter into the kingdom of Christ with ease, when he himself entered not into his own without pain.

Christ is followed by tribulation and penance, and not by living at ease and liberty.

A notable saying.

* 2 Cor. iv.

† Ephes. v.

‡ 1 John. ii.

§ Luc. ult.

THE LAST CHAPTER.

The Consideration of the painful Death of Christ is sufficient to make us content to suffer painful Death for his sake.



SURELY, cousin, as I said before, in bearing the loss of worldly goods, in suffering of captivity, thralldom, and imprisonment, and in the glad sustaining of worldly shame, that if we would in all these points deeply ponder the sample of our Saviour

himself, it were of itself alone sufficient to encourage every kind Christian man and woman, to refuse none of all those calamities for his sake. So say I now for

A brief and good description of Christ's pains.

painful death also, that if we could and would with due compassion conceive in our minds a right imagination and remembrance of Christ's

bitter painful passion,* of the many sore bloody strokes that the cruel tormentors with rods and whips gave him upon every part of his holy tender body, the scornful crown of sharp thorns beaten down upon his holy head, so strait and so deep, that on every part his blessed blood issued out and streamed down his lovely limbs drawn and stretched out upon the cross, to the intolerable pain of his forbeaten and sore beaten veins and sinews, new feeling with the cruel stretching and straining pain, far passing any cramp in every part of his blessed body at once: then the great long nails cruelly driven with hammers through his holy hands and feet, and in this horrible pain lift up and let hang with the peise of all his

* Johan. xix. ; Matth. xxvii. ; Marc. xv. ; Luc. xxiii.

body, bearing down upon the painful wounded places, so grievously pierced with nails, and in such torment (without pity, but not without many despites) suffered to be pined and pained the space of more than three long hours, till himself willingly gave up unto his Father his holy soul: after which yet to shew the mightiness of their malice, after his holy soul departed, they pierced his holy heart with a sharp spear, at which issued out the holy blood and water whereof his holy sacraments have inestimable secret strength: if we would, I say, remember these things in such wise, as would God we would, I verily think and suppose that the consideration of his incomparable kindness could not in such wise fail to inflame our key-cold hearts, and set them on fire in his love, that we should find ourself not only content, but also glad and desirous, to suffer death for his sake, that so marvellous lovingly letted not to sustain so far passing painful death for ours.

Would God we would here to the shame of our cold affection again toward God, for such fervent love, and inestimable kindness of God toward us: would God we would, I say, but consider what hot affection many of these fleshly lovers have borne, and daily do ^{fleshly lovers' affection.} bear to those upon whom they doat! How many of them have not letted to jeopard their lives, and how many have willingly lost their lives indeed without either great kindness shewed them before (and afterward, you wot well, they could nothing win), but even that it contented and satisfied their mind, that by their death their lover should clearly see how faithfully they loved? The delight whereof, imprinted in their phantasy, not assuaged only, but counterpeised also (they thought) all their pain. Of these affections with the wonderful dolorous effects following thereon, not only old written stories, but over that I think in every country Christian and heathen both, experience giveth us proof enough. And is it not then a wonderful shame for us for the dread of temporal death, to forsake our Saviour that willingly suffered so painful death, rather than he would forsake us, considering that beside that he shall for our suffering

so highly reward us with everlasting wealth? Oh! if he that is content to die for her love, of whom he looketh after for no reward, and yet by his death goeth from her, might by his death be sure to come to her, and ever after in delight and pleasure to dwell with her: such a lover would not let here to die for her twice. And how cold lovers be we then unto God, if rather than die for him once we will refuse him and forsake him for ever that both died for us before, and hath also provided that if we die here for him, we shall in heaven everlastingly both live and also reign with him. For, as St. Paul saith, if we suffer with him, we shall reign with him.*

Many die willingly for fame. How many Romans, how many noble courages of other sundry countries have willingly given their own lives, and suffered great deadly pains, and very painful deaths for their countries, and the respect of winning by their deaths the only reward of worldly renown and fame? And should we then shrink to suffer as much for eternal honour in heaven and everlasting glory?

Obstinate heretics die for vain glory, and Catholics do shrink for true glory. The devil hath some also so obstinate heretics that endure wittingly painful death for vain glory: and is it not more than shame, that Christ shall see his Catholics forsake his faith, rather than suffer the same for heaven and very glory? Would God, as I many times have said, that the remembrance of Christ's kindness in suffering his passion for us, the consideration of hell that we should fall in by forsaking of him, the joyful meditation of eternal life in heaven, that we shall win with this short temporal death patiently taken for him, had so deep a place in our breast, as reason would they should, and as (if we would do our devoir toward it, and labour for it, and pray therefor) I verily think they should.

A notable point to mark, how to overcome the fear and pain of death. For then should they so take up our mind, and ravish it all another way, that as a man hurt in a fray feeleth not sometime his wound nor yet is not ware thereof, till his mind fall more thereon, so farforth, that sometime another man

sheweth him that he hath lost an hand, before he perceive it himself: so the mind ravished in the thinking deeply of those other things, Christ's death, hell and heaven, were likely to minish and put away of our painful death four parts of the feeling either of the fear, or of the pain. For fear of this am I very sure, if we had the fifteenth part of the love to Christ, that he both had, and hath unto us, all the pain of this Turk's persecution could not keep us from him, but that there would be at this day as many martyrs here in Hungary, as have been afore in other countries of old. And of this point put I no doubt, but that if the Turk stood even here, with all his whole army about him, and every of them all were ready at hand with all the terrible torments that they could imagine, and (but if we would forsake the faith) were setting their torments to us, and to the increase of our terror, fell all at once in a shout, with trumpets, tabrets, and timbrels all blown up at once, and all their guns let go therewith, to make us a fearful noise, if there should suddenly then on the other side the ground quake and rive atwain, and the devils rise out of hell, and shew themselves in such ugly shape as damned wretches shall see them, and with that hideous howling that those hellhounds should screech, lay hell open on every side round about our feet, that as we stood we should look down into that pestilent pit, and see the swarm of silly souls in the terrible torments there, we would wax so fraid of the sight, that as for the Turk's host, we should scanty remember we saw them. And in good faith for all that, yet think I farther, that if there might then appear the great glory of God, the Trinity in his high marvellous majesty, our Saviour in his glorious manhood, sitting on his throne with his immaculate mother, and all the glorious company calling us there unto them, and that yet our way should be through marvellous painful death, before we could come at them, upon the sight, I say, of that glory there would I ween be no man that once would shrink thereat, but every man would run on toward them, in all that ever he

This very thing happened to the martyrs of old.

Lack of fear of hell makes us fear persecution so much.

Lack of faith of heavenly bliss maketh us shrink to run thitherward.

might, though there lay for malice to kill us by the way, both all the Turk's tormentors, and all the devils too. And therefore, cousin, let us well consider these things, and let us have sure hope in the help of God, and I then doubt not but that we shall be sure, that as the prophet saith, the truth of his promise shall so compass us with a pavice, that of this incursion of this midday devil, this Turk's persecution, we shall never need to fear. For either if we trust in God well, and prepare us therefor, the Turk shall never meddle with us, or else if he do, harm shall he none do us, but instead of harm, inestimable good. Of whose gracious help wherefore should we so sore now despair, except we were so mad men as to ween, that either his power or his mercy were

*God can and
doth make mar-
tyrs now.*

worn out already, when we see so many a thousand holy martyrs by his holy help suffered as much before, as any man shall be put to

*Some were as
tender of old,
as we be now.*

now? Or what excuse can we have by the tenderness of our flesh, when we can be no more tender than were many of them, among whom were not only men of strength, but also weak

women and children. And sith the strength of them all stood in the help of God, and that the very strongest of them all was never able of themselves, and with God's help the feeblest of them all was strong enough to stand against all the world, let us prepare ourself with prayer, with our whole trust in his help, without any trust in our own strength; let us think thereon and prepare us in our

*We must not
seek persecu-
tion. An high
pride to desire
martyrdom.*

minds thereto long before; let us therein conform our will unto his, not desiring to be brought unto the peril of persecution (for it seemeth a proud high mind to desire martyr-

dom) but desiring help and strength of God, if he suffer us to come to the stress, either being sought, formed, or brought out against our wills, or else being by his commandment (for the comfort of our cure) bounden to abide, let us fall to fasting, to prayer, to almsdeed in time, and give that unto

God that may be taken from us.

If the devil put in our mind the saving of our land and

our goods, let us remember that we cannot save them long. If he fear us with exile and fleeing from our country, let us remember that we be born into the broad world (and not like a tree to stick still in one place), and that whithersoever we go God shall go with us. If he threaten us with captivity, let us tell him again, better is it to be thrall unto man a while for the pleasure of God, than by displeasing of God be perpetual thrall unto the devil. If he threat us with imprisonment, let us tell him, we will rather be man's prisoners a while here on earth, than by forsaking the faith be his prisoners for ever in hell. If he put in our minds the terror of the Turks, let us consider his false sleight therein; for this tale he telleth us, to make us forget him. But let us remember well, that in respect of himself the Turk is but a shadow, nor all that they can all do, can be but a fleabiting in comparison of the mischief that he goeth about. The Turks are but his tormentors, for himself doth the deed. Our Lord saith in the Apocalypse, *Ecce missurus est diabolus aliquos ex vobis in carcerem, ut tentemini*,—The devil shall send some of you to prison, to tempt you.* He saith not that man shall, but that the devil shall himself. For without question, the devil's own deed it is, to bring us by his temptation with fear and force thereof into eternal damnation. And therefore saith St. Paul, *Non est nobis colluctatio adversus carnem et sanguinem, sed, &c.*—Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the princes and powers, and ghostly enemies that be rulers of these darkneses, &c.† Thus may we see, that in such persecutions, it is the midday devil himself that maketh such incursion upon us, by the men that are his ministers, to make us fall for fear. For till we fall, he can never hurt us. And therefore saith St. James, *Resistite diabolo, et fugiet a vobis*,—Stand against the devil, and he shall flee from you. For he never runneth upon a man to seize on him with his claws, till he see him down on the ground willingly fallen himself. For his fashion is to set his servants against us,

Man is free
born, and not
bound to one
place.

The devil him-
self worketh by
ministers.

* Apocal. iii.

† Ephes. vi.

and by them to make us for fear, or for impatience to fall, and himself in the meanwhile compasseth us, running and roaring like a rampant lion about us, looking who will fall, that he then may devour him. *Adversarius vester diabolus* (saith St. Peter) *tanquam leo rugiens circuit quærens quem devoret*,—Your adversary the devil like a roaring lion, runneth about in circuit, seeking whom he may devour.* The devil it is therefore, that (if we for fear of men will fall) is ready to run upon us, and devour us. And is it wisdom then, so much to think upon the Turks that we forget the devil?

The lion sets
his servants to
work.

When lions
be abroad, fear
not foisting
curs.

What madman is he, that when a lion were about to devour him, would vouchsafe to regard the biting of a little foisting cur?

Therefore when he roareth out upon us by the threats of mortal men, let us tell him, that with our inward eye we see him well enough, and intend to stand and fight with him, even hand to hand. If he threaten us, that we be too weak, let us tell him that our captain Christ is with us, and that we shall fight with his strength that hath vanquished him already, and let us fence us with faith, and comfort us with hope, and smite the devil in the face with a firebrand of charity.

A firebrand of
charity.

Our persecu-
tors are to be
pitied and
prayed for.

For surely if we be of that tender loving mind that our master was, and not hate them that kill us, but pity them and pray for them, with sorrow for the peril that they work to themselves; that fire of charity thrown in his face, striketh the devil suddenly so blind, that he cannot see where to

fasten a stroke on us.

When we feel us too bold, remember our own feebleness. When we feel us too faint, remember Christ's strength. In our fear, let us remember Christ's painful agony, that himself would (for our comfort) suffer before his passion, to the intent that no fear should make us despair. And ever call for his help, such as himself list to send us, and then we need never to doubt, but that either he shall keep us from the painful death, or shall not fail so to strength us in it, that he

The last and
best comfort.

* 1 Pet. v.

shall joyously bring us to heaven by it. And then doth he much more for us, than if he kept us from it. For as God did more for poor Lazar,* in helping him patiently to die for hunger at the rich man's door, than if he had brought him to the door all the rich glutton's dinner: so though he be gracious to a man, whom he delivereth out of painful trouble, yet doth he much more for a man, if through right painful death he deliver him from this wretched world into eternal bliss. From which whosoever shrink away with forsaking of his faith, and falleth in the peril of everlasting fire, he shall be very sure to repent it ere it be long after. For I ween that whensoever he falleth sick next, he will wish that he had been killed for Christ's sake before.

*Many have and
do wish this.*

What folly is it then for fear to flee from that death, which thou seest thou shalt shortly after wish thou hadst died? Yea, I ween, almost every good Christian man would very fain this day, that he had been for Christ's faith cruelly killed yesterday, even for the desire of heaven, though there were no hell. But to fear, while the pain is coming, there is all our let. But then if we would remember hell pain on the other side, into which we fall while we flee from this, then should this short pain be no let at all.

*The greatest
let, and remedy
against it.*

And yet should we be more pricked forward, if we were faithful, by deep considering of the joys of heaven, of which the apostle saith, *Non sunt condignæ passionēs hujus temporis ad futuram gloriam, quæ revelabitur in nobis*,—The passions of this time be not worthy of the glory that is to come, which shall be shewed in us.†

We should not, I ween, cousin, need much more in all this whole matter, than that one text of St. Paul, if we would consider it well.

*Hope of hea-
venly joy pass-
eth all trouble.*

For surely, mine own good cousin, remember that if it were possible for me and you alone, to suffer as much trouble, as the whole world doth together all, that were not worthy of itself to bring us to the joy which we hope to have everlastingly. And therefore I pray you let the consideration of that joy put out all worldly trouble out of

* Luc. xvi.

† Rom. viii.

your heart, and also pray that it may do the same in me. And even thus will I, good cousin, with these words make a sudden end of my whole tale, and bid you farewell. For now I begin to feel myself somewhat weary.

VINCENT.—Forsooth, good uncle, this is a good end : and it is no marvel though you be waxen weary. For I have this day put you to so much labour, that saving for the comfort that yourself may take of your time so well bestowed, and for the comfort that I have myself taken, and more shall, I trust, for your good counsel given ; else would I be very sorry to have put you to so much pain. But now shall our Lord reward and recompense you therefor, and many shall, I trust, pray for you. For to the intent that the more may take profit by you, I purpose, uncle, as my poor wit and learning will serve me, to put your good counsel in remembrance, not in our language only, but in the *Almaine* tongue too. And thus praying God to give me and all other that shall read it, the grace to follow your good counsel therein, I shall commit you to God.

ANTONY.—Sith you be minded, cousin, to bestow so much labour thereon, I would it had happed you to fetch the counsel at some wiser man that could have given you better. But better men may set more things, and better also, thereto. And in the meantime, I beseech our Lord to breathe of his Holy Spirit into the reader's breast, which inwardly may teach him in heart, without whom, little availeth all that all the mouths of the world were able to teach in men's ears. And thus, good cousin, farewell, till God bring us together again, either here, or in heaven ! Amen !

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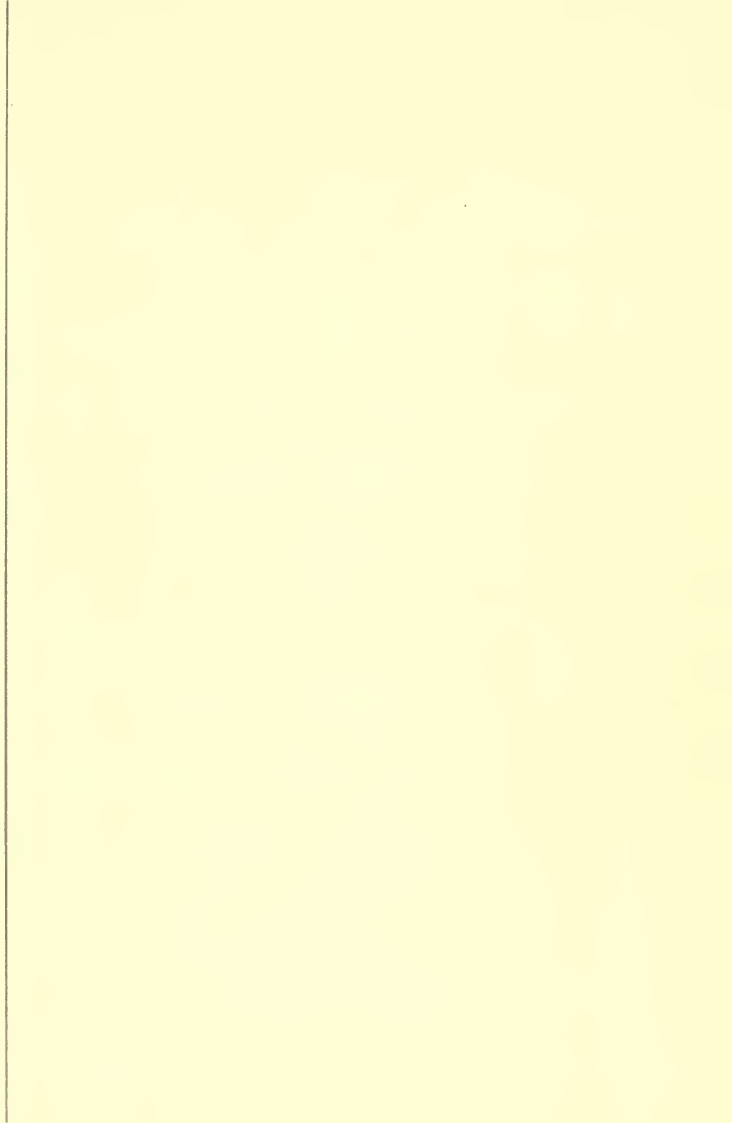
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